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THE MISINTERPRETATION OF MAN

The Misinterpretation of Man

STUDIES IN EUROPEAN THOUGHT
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By

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In gratitude to

FRANK KLEIN

the only surviving and never failing
friend of my early youth, and to the
memory of the three others

VIKTOR ŠULC
ADOLF KIENZL
EMIL KIENZL

who were killed

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SOME PERSONAL REMARKS

THE purpose of this study was originally to trace the deeper roots of the ideas which found their most striking and disastrous expression in German National Socialism. It was for this reason that I restricted my investigation to those trends of European thought whose greatest influence had been in Germany. But the results of this investigation showed clearly that I had been tracing the roots of a danger which was, and still is, threatening the whole of our civilization—a recognition confirmed by the fact that the disappearance of the systems against which the war was fought has not brought about the secure peace which they alone seemed to endanger. It has led only to a further extension of the chaos by which one country after another is lost to our civilization, and by which its complete destruction is threatened.

I beg the reader of this book, therefore, not to consider it as describing a development which is purely German or European, but to consider its general validity. It is true that most of the men with whom it is concerned were German, and I hope, too, that this book will be useful in conveying some knowledge of Europe, for the lack of understanding of the general European situation has always been a grave danger. It is also true that, if these ideas develop elsewhere, it will probably not be in the same way as they did in Germany. Even when they are the same, they affect the situation in each country in different ways and to different degrees. But these are comparatively minor differences and they are altogether outweighed by the similarities, for the conditions of modern society, as well as the spiritual crisis of our time, do not vary in essentials throughout western civilization.

Those of us who have become aware of this danger by similar experiences are again watching, with increasing apprehension, the signs of an all too familiar crisis. All the Christian virtues, magnanimity, forgiveness, love of one's enemies and the urge to help the suffering whoever they may be, are more and more despised as "unrealistic" and as signs of weakness, while those qualities which have obviously devastated our world, heroic virtue, nationalistic passion, ruthless warfare and ruthless retribution, are once more considered as realistic and praiseworthy. The Christian tradition is losing its hold over a greater and greater majority of all nations, and democracy, even if still very much alive in some parts of the world, is in danger of becoming more and more powerless, because the intricate machinery of the modern state and particularly of foreign policy can no longer be understood, and therefore no longer directed, by the average citizen. The decisions which influence our lives most deeply are taken outside the sphere of parliaments; they seem more and more to come from a mysterious fate which cannot be directed by anybody.

The greatest danger lies in a tendency which is extremely strong today—that of struggling against bad actions, not because they are bad but because they are done by another nation. The same kind of action is considered as wrong and abominable if it can be labelled as German (or with some similar label), and as right and desirable if it is done by others against Germany (or against the nation or race whom we happen at the moment to despise). This device for perverting the moral judgment was used consciously by many totalitarian systems to blind the people and to educate them in cruelty. There is probably no such intention at work at present, but the consequences of the destruction of a soundly based morality must, nevertheless, be the same. So long as we denounce wrong actions when they can be

ascribed to others, but justify them when they are our own, we are heading for disaster.

It is most dangerous, too, to explain everything we do not like as being a result of the last hundred and fifty years of German tradition, for a few years seem to have been sufficient to cause a considerable growth of the same tendencies everywhere. The forces at work in all countries are fundamentally the same, and so are the potentialities of human nature. We shall escape these evils only if we recognize that the danger to which Germany was one of the first to succumb is a common danger.

For these reasons it seems important to me to point out beforehand what this book is meant to be. I have tried to show the wrong turning which European thought took during the nineteenth century and to challenge its dangerous inheritance, so as to make room for the growth of different and better ideals. For it is this inheritance which, for all of us, prevents our recognizing clearly the impending danger.

Two further remarks may help the reader to find his way through the book.

As I have tried to follow the development of thought historically, I have had to start with the more difficult subjects, with the achievements of Kant and Goethe. This was also justified from another point of view; very simple doctrines are frequently based upon the most complicated theories, even though their authors may not always be aware of it; this was the case in the nineteenth century. The easier teachings, therefore, can only be fully understood after their foundations have been examined. Those readers, however, who find Chapters II and III rather difficult, can proceed from Chapter I to Chapter IV or V, especially if they are more familiar with one of the problems considered there, for these chapters present no great difficulties. This will help them to grasp

the main line of argument, and thus to read the preceding chapters afterwards with more ease.

Unfortunately I lost all my notes concerning this investigation on one of the three occasions on which I had to escape from the ever-growing sphere of the Nazi régime. Owing to the very large number of books to which I refer, it has proved impossible to trace all my quotations without the help of these notes. I have been reasonably successful in some of the chapters and these are provided with footnotes; in others I have found it better to replace the incomplete references by a bibliography which will be found at the end of the book and which may prove helpful. I refer to this bibliography at the beginning of each chapter in which I was unable to give precise references. When I have used existing English translations of books in foreign languages, I have referred to them by their English titles; where I have made my own translation, the original titles are given.

* * *

I have to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Professor H. H. Farmer and to Professor C. E. Raven, without whose patient and unrelenting encouragement I could not have ventured to write this book.

Finally, I have to express my thanks to Mr. Douglas Hewitt who, regardless of all the trouble and time involved, gave me his invaluable help in finding the right English expression for my thoughts. He collaborated in this throughout the writing of the book, and much of the credit for its present form therefore goes to him.

PAUL ROUBICZEK

THE MISINTERPRETATION OF MAN

CHAPTER I

THE EXPERIMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE predominance of Christianity which had been characteristic of the Middle Ages was broken by the Renaissance in the south, by the Reformation in the north, and throughout Europe by Humanism. The chains which the supreme power of the Church had fastened on human life and the human mind had grown unbearable, and at first the Renaissance and Humanism strove only to shake these off, the Reformation to renew a purified Christianity. They did not attack Christianity; they fought only to bring man freedom and the realization of the dignity of the human mind. Yet they started a development which led to a fundamental change in the significance of religion for man.

Previously, human life on this earth had been considered a part, even a small part, of a Christian reality which included both this world and the next, the beginning and the end of time, which, disclosing infinity, transcended infinitely this earthly life and the span of time known to us. But in the course of this development religion became merely a part of human life, one among the many experiences and endeavours of man, a part only of his knowledge. It could be considered his highest endeavour; man could indeed dedicate himself entirely to religion, but even so it remained always subordinated to human life. The scope of religion became, on the whole, more

and more restricted, and eventually man learned completely to do without it.

This development reached its climax in the 19th century. This century can be seen as a great experiment—the attempt of European man to renounce Christ and to live without God. After two thousand years of blind belief, so it seemed to the 19th century, man, free at last from all prejudices, confronted the truth itself. Christianity, to be sure, did not entirely disappear. It retained its power over a part of Europe, over a part of every nation, but it was pushed back more and more; it lost its importance in the general ordering of life, and the influential spiritual and political leaders paid no attention to it. All those who shaped the face of Europe in this century acknowledged at best, as one of the many feelings of man, an uncertain religious feeling, or they restricted religion to morals and ethics. So far as it could be subordinated to man, therefore, religion was not always questioned; an uncertain religiosity, derived from many religions, remained compatible with some important endeavours of this time. Christianity itself, in order to vindicate its position against the natural sciences, partially acquired the tinge of such an indistinct religiosity. Yet by many Christ and the Christian conception of God were completely renounced. Nietzsche only stated most definitely what was felt throughout Europe when he wrote an *Antichrist* and proclaimed: "God is dead."

The following investigation tries to determine whether or not this experiment has been successful. We are still living, although we do not realize it, in the world of thought of the 19th century; its ideas penetrate all our thinking, so that we often accept as self-evident what we ought to recognize as long since refuted. We uphold convictions in which we no longer really believe. It appears

high time that we became conscious of the achievements and failures of this century. Has the turning away from Christian belief disclosed a new basis for human life, or does it threaten us with the destruction of all certainty?

Today, this question is mostly answered with prejudices. Some people indeed rest safely on the Christian belief; they see only that the destruction we are witnessing is due to refusing to recognize Christ. Others feel a longing for that absolute trust which faith alone can give. For still others, Christianity is no longer a living reality; they consider its followers as an unimportant minority who do not understand the signs of the times, and the sole question for them is which of the many other beliefs to embrace.

It is the desire of the author to entrust himself to Christianity, but for this very reason he is convinced that this question must not be answered so simply. It cannot be mere accident that Christianity has been pushed so far into the background; only because it has become alien to life can it have lost its connection with life to such a degree. It must have been preached and developed in a wrong way. A belief, once lost, cannot be restored intentionally and artificially; it will gain new power only after we have been compelled to make assumptions which render it believable. The experiment of the 19th century is important for Christianity as well, for it discloses the mistakes and the gaps which have endangered and increasingly endanger Christianity.

Christian faith will regain general validity if it withstands the opposing ideas. It has to remain valid, even if we follow the other ideas as far as we believe them justified. To be a living faith it must be able to lead us where the other ideas do not reach. We must give the ideas which oppose Christianity the opportunity of convincing

us; only if the Christian belief remains stronger than they are, only if it comes out of the struggle against them purified and renewed, will it inspire that security and trust the lack of which threatens at present to destroy the European world.

It is necessary, therefore, to investigate in detail and without prejudice the ideas of the 19th century; the investigation has to be made in such a way as to have the same validity for the believer and for those who have embraced opposing ideas. For the sake of faith itself we must not start from Christianity; rather must we follow as far as possible the opposing ideas, and renounce all preconceived opinions. Assuming as little as possible, we must take our chance whether or not we shall be led back to faith. If we succeed in strengthening our belief in this way, we can hope to persuade our opponents too, or at least those of them who are perplexed; if not, we shall have to accept another system of thought.

The following investigation tries to present the struggle for the independence of man with the help of single examples. It does not strive to be comprehensive, nor does it give the history of the whole century. It confines itself to a selection of those attempts which seem most important for ourselves. The experiment which has just been summarized will be traced in so far as it is exemplified in the history of thought in the 19th century.

This restriction makes it necessary to leave out of consideration some trends, the investigation of which could probably be expected in a book of this kind. This limitation, however, is justified by the following reflections which have determined the scope of this book.

Although the world of ideas is investigated, no attempt is made to decide whether the spiritual movements of a period are caused by its material circum-

stances, or whether, on the contrary, the conditions are changed by the ideas. In this respect, too, the investigation approaches its subject without prejudice. This question will be considered only as soon and as far as it arises through a consideration of these ideas themselves.

But, however this question may be decided, the investigation of ideas remains important. It does not matter for our purpose how ideas arise, whether they are causes or effects; once they have come into being, they become realities which influence man's actions. Nobody can entirely escape their influence, not even the materialist who strives in the first place for material changes. It may be that Marxism, for example, is the necessary consequence of capitalist economy, but this consequence has been transformed into an idea, and it is as such that it is effective. To discuss ideas is to discuss realities.

The concentration upon the world of ideas inevitably prevents us from considering outward changes, the technical developments and, to a certain degree also, the progress of the natural sciences, but that does not mean that their importance is being overlooked. The enormous changes in externals in Europe between 1800 and 1900 would make it foolish in any case to deny their importance. As this investigation does not aim at comprehensiveness, so its limitation must not be taken as implying that everything not mentioned is considered as unimportant.

Nevertheless, a definite attitude of mind underlies this book; it is based upon the conviction that we cannot rely upon material changes alone, but that we have to prepare, to influence and to elaborate them by our thinking. Yet this assumption can hardly be called a prejudice. It will be the task of this book to show how decisively

the ideas of the 19th century still affect our lives. Have we to wait until outward changes shake us even more deeply than two world wars? Have we passively to accept technical and social changes in the blind faith that they will produce their moral consequences automatically? All material facts can be interpreted in a variety of ways; we see time and again that new developments are hindered or prevented by a wrong interpretation. Have we, therefore, to refrain from trying to prepare the future in our thinking?

A further restriction will be that we shall not attempt, even in the realm of ideas, to give their objective history, for we are interested in them only so far as they are still alive and powerful today. We shall not study the birth and development of all the ideas of the 19th century, but we shall choose those ideas in the terms of which we still think, and which still influence our life and thinking, and we shall take them up in the form in which they appear to us today, without considering whether or not this form is that which they assumed at the time. We want to separate the ideas which can help us from those which only hinder us, and to free the ideas from the associations which have overgrown them. We want to make room for the future in the sphere of ideas. We are not concerned with collecting mere data, nor with a disinterested survey, but with a struggle against the past for the sake of the present. Our investigation approaches the ideas without any preconceived theory, but it confronts them with our own lives, and tries to discover their value for ourselves. In this respect, but in this respect alone, it represents history one-sidedly, determined in this by the end it wants to serve.

This neglect of historical comprehensiveness, however, can easily be justified, for even the greatest comprehensiveness does not guarantee objectivity. The his-

tory of ideas, this most abstract part of history, cannot be separated from the philosophy of history, and this philosophy is always the expression, more or less disguised, of a tendency. History is open to an infinite number of interpretations, and past events are no touchstone for any philosophical assertions, for almost any preconceived theory can be made plausible by a skilful interpretation of these past events. The correctness of a theory could only be proved if accurate prophecies could be drawn from it, prophecies not of single events, which can occur for other reasons than expected, but of a succession of events over a considerable period of time. At the time of its creation, therefore, we can never know whether or not a philosophy of history has a reliable basis. It always remains the expression of an opinion about the contemporary world, and it is exactly such an historically clarified discussion of our time that is to be given here. Our task is simplified if this intention is not hidden behind the claim of historical comprehensiveness, but openly confessed.

This form of investigation has also to renounce another of the usual methods of approach, in that it does not attempt to give a psychological analysis of the creators or representatives of the ideas in question. But this limitation, too, does not appear as a serious loss. The psychological method is helpful so long as the relations between man and his deeds are doubtful or intentionally falsified; it becomes a meaningless playing with ideas as soon as these relationships can easily be discerned. Naturally, character and deed correspond, but of what use is it to us to learn to understand in its subtlest details the never-recurring deed of a unique character? We want to build up our own lives, we want to know how to live ourselves. For this reason, individual human destiny is here considered and interpreted as an example. We ask

how the ideas held good in the lives of their creators, and what the lives of these men disclose for us. Complicated psychological interrelations are considered only in order to recognize deviations, and to understand, even there, the general rules which can be applied to ourselves. We are concerned exclusively with the relation of ideas to life in general, and with their teaching for us. It should not be necessary to mention that we do not intend in discussing the representatives of these ideas to apportion praise or blame. It is not with them that we are arguing, but with ourselves.

This limitation is only possible because a further assumption is accepted, an assumption which seems to me so essential a condition of all those elements in our time which are fruitful and which promise help for the future, that it can only be a gain if it becomes the basis of this book as well. Human life is dependent and conditioned in so many ways that tragedy cannot be avoided. In spite of this, however, the conviction that every life must lead towards a tragic catastrophe seems to me a shirking of the most urgent problems of life. The crucifixion of Christ, the death of a martyr, tragic though they seem to the onlooker, do not represent a tragedy, but a fulfilment of life and its highest triumph. Even death, unavoidable as it is, can be interpreted, prepared for, experienced, in different ways. I start from the assumption, therefore, that it is possible to live in a right and in a wrong manner, and that the right way of living can transform even a terrible catastrophe into a fulfilment of life.

This "right life" may not always be the same—it may depend upon the contemporary situation; yet it is just this right way of living for today and tomorrow which we seek.

CHAPTER II

KANT: MAN'S NEW FREEDOM

BY THE second half of the 18th century, the struggle for the independence of man, which the Renaissance had begun, seemed crowned with complete victory. In the period of the Enlightenment all the mind's activities were thought of as coming within the realm of the intellect, so that they were cut off from matters outside the purely human nature of man. For the intellect recognizes as valid only what can withstand the test of reason, what man can understand, explain, and prove, that is, when he keeps strictly within the limits of his own powers. It seemed possible at this time to give a direction to life in this way, and to understand it.

But the victory quickly proved pernicious; the intellect destroyed belief without replacing it by anything else. European culture stagnated and was in danger of losing all impetus; the Rococo, a wanton playing with results long since achieved, was inevitably short-lived. The driving force with which the Enlightenment started was soon lost, and the endeavours of its greatest representatives were eventually reduced to erotic toying, court-dallying, and drawing-room intrigues.

Because of this dictatorship of the intellect, it was in the sphere of philosophy that the confusion was most obvious. Here the intellect had just enough power to ask for a proof of the existence of God, so that this concept, too, was dragged before the forum of reason. The proof was bound to fail, for God transcends inconceiv-

ably the sphere of intellect. Nevertheless, the search for this proof implied the demand that it had to be achieved, for as the validity of the concept of God had not yet been questioned, the intellect would have had to confess its impotence if it had not been able to include a proof of God. Atheism was rejected even by Voltaire. Yet as the possibility of the proof was taken for granted, it gradually acquired more and more grotesque forms; speculation, not yet limited by scientific thinking, ventured the boldest combinations.

One of the first important philosophic books of Kant, *The Dreams of a Ghost-Seer*, was an almost humorous polemic treatise. A philosopher who could assert of himself that nothing was awe-inspiring to him but "what, in the way of sincerity, is admitted into a quiet mind, open to all arguments" [1]—such a thinker could free himself from the contemporary abuses of thinking only by mockery and laughter.

How seriously, however, this confusion had to be taken is shown by the development of morals. The moral laws, the rules for human behaviour, had been chiefly divine laws, yet as the proof of a dictating God never became quite convincing, the quest of the intellect for tangible proofs was applied directly to morals. The only sufficient reason for human activity which the intellect can acknowledge is personal advantage, and thus this motive was given to the moral laws. More decisively than ever before, morals were supported by a promise of a reward. A proof was attempted that the happiness of man, his really lasting advantage, if clearly recognized, is achieved with the help of moral actions. In this way, however, ethics were thoroughly falsified. Previously, the moral laws had been seen as majestic commands of God,

[1] Träume eines Geistersehers, I. Teil, 4. Hauptstück.

and only occasionally and incidentally had they been made more tempting by a promise. Now they were uprooted, but not replaced. The same old laws were reestablished by the aid of immoral motives, and the way was open for the moral justification of the most immoral deeds.

In short, man thought himself free, but he had only robbed himself of the heights and depths of life. His activities were more and more confined to those lowlands which were adequate to his new freedom. This was sufficient to start the French Revolution, but insufficient to preserve its significance for us.

But at this crossroads, ten years before the revolution begins, Kant published his *Critique of Pure Reason*, a book for which his contemporaries, appreciating rightly the importance of his achievement, called him "the all-crushing." For this book is more revolutionary than the revolution itself; it is in this book that the rights of man, which the revolution soon surrendered to the dictatorship of Napoleon, become unimpeachable, eternal and consistent demands. The real meaning of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment is established; the positive elements in the works of Kant's predecessors, notably Hume, Rousseau and Voltaire, are justified and fulfilled, so that they are not consumed by the revolution, but remain valid and effective until today. The solution is found first where the confusion had been greatest; philosophy becomes independent of religion. We have, therefore, to begin with the consideration of the work of Kant.

Kant achieves this end with the help of two fundamental theses. The first is that all our knowledge is conditioned by the laws of our thinking. We cannot think without our thinking apparatus, and it follows that it is

impossible to control these laws of our thinking, for there is no external viewpoint from which we could compare the world with our thinking, and examine how they correspond. All our knowledge, therefore, remains relative, conditioned by the structure of our mind. We can never recognize anything outside our experience, never the true nature of things upon which this is based, always the appearance and never the "thing per se" which creates it. The second thesis is that we ourselves are embodiments of this thing per se. It is true, we have to judge even ourselves with the help of our thinking, and know, therefore, even ourselves as appearances only. But, quite independent of all intellectual knowledge, we hear within ourselves the voice of the absolute. We have a different kind of knowledge, based on our feeling, which discloses good and evil and prescribes rules for our actions, without concern for whether our conscious knowledge agrees with these laws or not, or whether our intellect accepts or rejects them.

The first thesis not only makes an end of the controversy about the proof of the existence of God, which is no longer important, but also makes metaphysics impossible. Metaphysics come into being when concepts, won from experience, are applied to objects which lie outside all possible experience—whether qualities known to us are ascribed to God and immortality, or whether concepts which are mere abstractions from our experience, like matter, force, or ether, are considered as final explanation of the true nature of the universe. Kant agrees that to progress from rudimentary sense impressions to conscious experience is only possible with the help of those concepts which had served for the proof of God's existence; we can exclude from our thinking neither infinity in space and time, nor perfection, nor

the assumption of a first cause. But these concepts, according to Kant, do not justify any conclusions which transcend the realm of experience. They are indispensable for the ordering of our experience, but as such they are nothing more than formal and abstract concepts which do not give the slightest idea of an object, and are completely empty if we do not fill them with a content by our perception. They cannot, therefore, give content to metaphysics. On the other hand, as our experience is dependent on these concepts, it is not possible to regard it as comprehensive. These concepts are necessary for experience, indeed they make it possible, yet they cannot be derived from it. They belong to the laws of our thinking and are given, therefore, a priori, before any experience; they have to be added to it. For this reason, experience itself cannot provide the final explanation.

This teaching is so important because, in contrast to all idealistic and materialistic theories, one can really confide oneself to it. Kant never denies the existence of the thing per se; our organs have to be stirred by it for us to have any kind of experience, in order to become conscious of any appearances. The world does not exist in our mind alone, but also outside it in reality. Kant asserts only what cannot be denied—that the laws of our thinking form an integral part of all our knowledge, and that, therefore, absolute knowledge is impossible. At the same time, however, mind is not unimportant and superfluous, for with its help alone we can grasp the world, and it cannot be severed from our experience in any way. It is a forming and essential part of our world. "Without the power of sense we should be aware of no object, without the power of intellect we could think of no object. Thoughts which lack content are

empty, perceptions which lack concepts are blind." [2] In this way, the unchecked development of man is guaranteed, together with the reality of the outside world.

If knowledge were absolute, the importance of our thinking would be crushed by natural laws, leaving no room for the importance of our existence. We should either lose ourselves entirely in the world, or we should have to secure our importance by dogmas. Now we can follow our experience without hindrance, for the concepts which make experience possible guarantee at the same time the sovereignty and freedom of man, by excluding absolute knowledge and establishing the rôle which we ourselves have to play in the world. The thinking apparatus itself, which prevents any intellectual knowledge of the absolute, is a miracle and an enigma, vouching for the existence of, and our partaking in, the absolute. The way for the natural sciences is open, but at the same time—and this achievement is not yet fully realized—their sphere is defined and limited, so that they cannot swallow up the whole of life.

Even more important is the second thesis. Up to then, the majesty of the moral laws had been derived from supernatural concepts; the validity of these laws had been founded either religiously or philosophically upon metaphysical assumptions, or by the connection, forcibly established by mystics, between the human and the divine spheres. Some conception of God, or at least of another world, had always been their background and source. Thanks to Kant it is possible without any supernatural support to make the moral world real. For the first time the attempt is made, not to found the moral laws upon divine or metaphysical commands, but to

[2] Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Der transzendentalen Elementarlehre 2. Teil, Einleitung, § 1.

represent them as a part of human nature, as a knowledge of human facts which can be scientifically ascertained. It is true that this means a disclosure of the divine in man, and these divine elements connect his fate once more with the whole world, known and unknown, but before the thesis is falsified (we shall come back to these falsifications in a moment), the emphasis lies upon the knowledge of human nature. The supernatural no longer supports the moral laws; on the contrary, the moral laws point towards the supernatural, and the given nature of man discloses the existence of an absolute. The moral problems are considered only so far as they can be recognized in man.

This teaching, too, is unassailably true to life, and serves life. Every human being possesses a knowledge of good and evil, based on his feeling, which forces him to value his actions according to these standards, and to call them good or evil. Yet a fundamental contradiction has to be overcome before this kind of knowledge can be accepted.

The laws of thinking, which condition our experience, connect the different experiences according to the laws of causality; they prove that the effect necessarily, and therefore unfreely, follows its cause. But the concepts of good and evil, and our sense of responsibility which makes us apply them, presuppose freedom, for only if we act freely are we entitled to value our actions morally. The overcoming of this contradiction is of paramount importance, for we cannot avoid regarding our actions as free and judging them by moral standards, and yet our intellect sees them as unfree. The feeling of freedom and of the validity of the standards of good and evil is so strong that it cannot be destroyed by any proof of our bondage, however convincing, not even if we sincerely

believe in the proof. But our intellect cannot acknowledge this freedom. Kant is right when he says that moral actions are demanded from us even if "there should never have been actions which really sprang from such pure sources," because "reason itself, independent of all experience, ordains what ought to take place." "Pure sincerity in friendship" for example "is required of every man . . . though there might never yet have been a sincere friend." [3] Any system which does not resolve this contradiction must remain futile.

Kant solves this problem so perfectly that it loses its importance. His discovery of the laws of thinking makes it clear that we have at our disposal two aspects of the world. On the one hand, there is the external world of our experience and intellectual knowledge which, owing to the decisive influence of the laws of our thinking, is recognized as a world of necessity, a world of appearances. On the other hand, there is our inner world of freedom, the world of the moral laws, inexplicable, yet governed by the voice of the absolute. The partaking in our knowledge of the laws of our thinking reconciles these two worlds for the first time; they can exist side by side, without forcing us to renounce logic or to disbelieve experience. The laws of thinking limit the sphere of intellectual interpretation and make room, therefore, for freedom and ethics, and by excluding any intellectual knowledge of the absolute, they enable us to acknowledge the miracles and enigmas which we experience in a different way. They justify our intrinsic knowledge of inexplicable absolute standards.

Thus the focussing of attention upon man is really achieved. Just as in the past, man, lacking knowledge of

[3] Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics, transl. by T. K. Abbott, 3rd ed., pp. 24–25.

the laws of thinking, had been enslaved by scholasticism and speculation, which claimed absolute validity, so, in the future, if he forgets the discoveries of Kant, he must inevitably succumb, as he did in the 19th century, to the overpowering onslaught of the natural sciences. No space would be left for man's true nature in face of that scientific and technical conquest of the world which the 19th century enabled him to achieve. And were it not for the possibility of a different, but nevertheless logical and scientific, exploration and penetration of the moral nature of man, his moral consciousness would have to take refuge in speculation, which, in the age of science, would mean a painful self-negation. Kant is the first and only philosopher to make this new and chaotic world habitable, and his work transforms even such a world into a dwelling for a powerful, fully alive and fully developed humanity. In the middle of an intellectual dwarfing of thinking, of a conventional restriction of religion, of romantic sentimentality and pathetically bleak heroism, a new, strong and beautiful feeling can arise, a feeling which gives to the independence of man its justification and its splendour.

Kant himself has expressed this feeling in perfect and lucid words. Concluding his second chief work, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, he writes: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heaven above and the moral law within. I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my

connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding. . . . The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an animal creature, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second on the contrary infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world." [4]

In the course of our investigation we shall have to stress, time and again, how the discoveries of Kant have been falsified, first by himself, and later by all his pupils, and how dangerously they have been undermined. It is perhaps good, therefore, to remember first how great, in spite of all distortions, have been the effects of his teaching.

Hardly a single one of the important thoughts of the last century would have been possible without his preparatory work. His justification of enigmas and his discovery of the lawgiving power of the human mind opened the way for the Romantic Movement. Fichte, the romantic philosopher and a pupil of Kant, played an important part in bringing about the participation of hesitating Prussia in the wars against Napoleon, thus helping decisively to shape modern Europe, and it was

[4] Critique of Practical Reason, transl. by T. K. Abbott, 4th ed., p. 260.

Fichte also who started the overestimation of individuality, which created the modern form of individualism and inspired Nietzsche. Hegel, making use of Kant's discovery of the laws of thinking, transformed the philosophy of history into one of the dominating impulses of the century. Without him the teaching of Darwin could never have had such a general and far-reaching influence, and Marxism would not have been possible. Schopenhauer, who considered himself as fulfilling Kant's work, led once more to Nietzsche, who thought himself independent of Kant, and also to Wagner, whose impact upon the world of feeling must not be underrated. Schopenhauer accomplished for the world of feeling what Hegel did for that of thinking. At present, the immediate followers of Kant are more or less forgotten, but he himself is more alive than ever; the latest development of the natural sciences provoked a new and direct discussion of Kant's work, for only his teaching remained valid in face of the newest discoveries. Modern thinking and feeling, therefore, can be said to begin with Kant's liberation of personality.

Kant himself, however, is forced by his discoveries to face new tasks. The sciences, freed from the fetters of dogma and justified by philosophy, no longer need help; Kant has only an indirect importance for them, in that he abolishes the competition of speculation. Science will find its way without Kant. So the main interest of philosophy is shifted to the sphere of ethics. The thirst of man for absolute knowledge and for freedom is insatiable, and as both are accessible only in the sphere of ethics, it is there that Kant is necessarily driven. He is conscious of this necessity and even believes that he detects in his discoveries an "intentional device of nature," for it seems to him that man's urge towards metaphysics

shows him that he cannot have absolute knowledge, in order to force him to concern himself with ethics, where alone he can reach the absolute. And the first discoveries of Kant, which are purely formal, cannot yet be sufficient, for, if man has to be prevented from turning back to metaphysics, he has to find a content in ethics, and for that definite laws and clear rules for his activity are necessary. To be led to ethics is important only if we can occupy ourselves with them, and if they can satisfy us. The main task now confronting Kant, therefore, is the completion of his system of ethics.

He succeeds, first, in finding the starting point for all moral teaching, and by defining the task of reason in establishing morals he prevents any relapse into mysticism which, owing to the necessary stress on the feelings, would seem almost inevitable.

The emphasis on feeling as the basis of the knowledge of good and evil might seem to make any conscious perfection of morals entirely superfluous, for the voice of conscience is clearly and distinctly alive in every human being. Even the simplest men, if they are not confused or misled, can decide so certainly what is good and what evil that it would seem sufficient, "without in the least teaching them anything new," to "direct their attention to the principle they themselves employ, and that therefore we do not need science or philosophy to know what we should do to be honest and good, yea, even wise and virtuous." [5] But Kant easily refutes this objection: "Innocence is indeed a glorious thing, only, on the other hand, it is very sad that it cannot well maintain itself, and is easily seduced." [6] The simple man is continually

[5] Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics, transl. by T. K. Abbott, 3rd ed., p. 20.

[6] *Op. cit.* p. 35.

being confused. The animal desires, which struggle against the moral forces, already have in the simplest of men a very seductive art of persuasion. Traditional customs and morality frequently depart very far from true morality, and the exigencies of everyday life are in conflict with it. Natural morality can only be saved from all these seductions by a clear and comprehensive moral teaching, which brings morals completely into the sphere of consciousness. Reason cannot explain the basis of morals, but it is indispensable for comprehending morality as a part of human nature.

Kant moreover, with his magnificent intellect, defines the pure essence of all ethical teaching. The last version of his Categorical Imperative reads: "Act so that you use humanity, in your own person as well as in any other, always as an end, and never as means only." [7] The holiness of humanity and its liberation from all bondage are firmly established by this command. We are no longer able to hide behind supernatural orders, nor to use a cruel fate as an excuse, nor to justify the destruction of humanity by higher values; we have become independent, because the highest measure of our life and deeds lies within ourselves.

Yet we have intentionally quoted first the last of the many versions of the Categorical Imperative. Kant's strength is declining while he climbs to this height, and we are approaching the limits of his achievement. Kant has dedicated his life to the struggle against metaphysical speculation; to serve this purpose he was forced to devote most of his strength to metaphysical investigations, and so he himself cannot escape metaphysical conclusions. What is most important to him is the fact that the sphere of morals is the sphere of the absolute; in

[7] Metaphysik der Sitten, 2. Abschnitt.

spite of his struggle against them he applies all moral knowledge to deduce metaphysical conclusions. As soon as he has stated a moral law, he does not go on to ask how we must live, but what we can conclude from the existence of morality.

It is true that Kant's metaphysical conclusions never contradict his critical teaching. He never considers them as absolute knowledge, but only as postulates and analogies correct by the laws of logic. The concepts of God and of immortality are introduced because it is not possible to fit morals into a consistent picture of the world without these concepts, and because it seems necessary, therefore, to accept them if one accepts morality. Kant investigates *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*, without transcending this "Mere Reason." But it is this very limitation which is the mistake. Most of the followers of Kant consider his return to the ideas of God and immortality as a betrayal of his former discoveries, explicable only by his growing age. They are both wrong and right at the same time.

Religion is not an abstract doctrine, derived from man's knowledge, but a disclosure of facts, a disclosure of a reality which we cannot discover by relying upon our reason alone. It is a matter of faith, and therefore we need not believe in it, but in any case it does not come within the province of explanation and construction. While Kant struggles against metaphysics, he is doing a great service to religion as well, for by defining the sphere of philosophy he frees religion from encroachment by speculation, which, though irrelevant to religion, nevertheless endangers it by its claim to be absolute. After this liberation, there are two possible attitudes—either that reason is considered as sufficient, and religion therefore is superfluous, or that religion is necessary and its

world the real one, so that philosophy has to lead to its threshold and then to resign in face of the supernatural which religion discloses and which, as Kant himself has shown, cannot be discussed by philosophy. It is right to make philosophy independent from religion, but wrong to let it dominate over it.

Kant sees that philosophy in itself is not sufficient to cover all the ground there is, but that it forces us to make postulates which point towards religion; this is not a betrayal but a clear recognition of the true nature of reality. Yet Kant dwells on these postulates and makes deductions from them with the help of the intellect, and in this he is wrong, for he replaces religion by concepts which must remain empty when they are confined to the realm of pure intellect. By restricting himself to reason, Kant prevents himself from including Christianity, which gives a distinct meaning to all these concepts because they have been derived from the Christian religion, and in this restriction again Kant is right, for Christianity cannot be a part of philosophy. But he is wrong in including in philosophy the fundamental concepts of religion, for, severed from any religious teaching and feeling, they remain purely formal. In including them, he uses abstract thought in the very way he has proved wrong, and these empty abstractions lead him to some of those disastrous falsifications which he had proved to be inevitable if we think along such lines, and which he had struggled to abolish.

The last version of his Categorical Imperative, the most perfect statement of Kant's moral teaching, betrays at the same time most clearly and painfully the falsification of his teaching. For Kant makes use of it to prove that, if every human being, as a moral being, represents an end in itself, the community of moral men forms a

realm of ends—and this abstract and meaningless realm of ends destroys the moral autonomy of man as thoroughly as any speculation or any rigid convention created by wrong religious and moral teaching. Kant even falsifies the basis of his ethics, for this support and confirmation of morality is nothing other than the promise of reward, nothing other than a proof that obeying moral laws leads to happiness. Kant's morality is no longer valid for the sake of the good itself, but because it promises that God will admit moral man into the eternal realm of ends.

We are not led onwards, therefore, by the last version of this imperative, but referred backwards to previous versions, and there the content of ethics remains purely formal. The first version, "Act only according to such a maxim that you can will at the same time that it becomes a general law," [8] is again absolutely correct. It excludes all the dangers of unconsciousness and of instinctive egotism, and as the emphasis is laid upon the maxim—that is, upon intention and not on the deed—it also prevents us from judging the deeds of others. Rightly, the Categorical Imperative remains above all a measure of judging ourselves. But it does not direct our actions. We can, after acting, judge by it what we have done, but ethics should lead us to action and teach us how to live, not merely how to judge ourselves. Kant feels this himself and he varies the form of the imperative over and over again, eventually giving it, in order to make it appear more substantial, the name of duty. Duty, however, is once more an empty form, indispensable and beneficial if applied to right conduct, but very dangerous if its meaning is not stated, for then it can be applied to any conduct whatsoever. We need the

[8] *Op. cit.*, 2. Abschnitt.

concept of duty, because we have neither the heart nor will to do good without any compulsion, yet the empty concept of duty tends to become disastrous, because even the most immoral activities, partial jurisdiction, warmongering and systematic murder can be considered as duties and therefore as moral acts. Once again, the grossest offences against morality can be hallowed, and they have become almost unassailable.

Kant's aberration, however, does not diminish the importance of his work for us. Today we are at a sufficient distance from him to separate the positive from the negative elements of his work, and to recognize his great achievement in liberating man from dogma and speculation. On the contrary, even his aberrations can help us by pointing to the tasks which his achievements set us, for his failures have a reason which is easily seen. He is the first philosopher to discover the real importance of man, but he does not yet trust him. He, like the thinkers of the Enlightenment, believes in reason alone, and not in other capacities of human nature. The emancipation of man, which Kant demanded and justified, cannot come into being ready-made; it is not something which exists, but something which has to be fought for. It has to be created, and so we have to discover what makes it possible. We have to educate and to develop ourselves to become capable and worthy of this independence.

This conclusion is confirmed, in a most moving way, by Kant's own life, which merits the highest praise which can be given to the life of a philosopher.[9] All

[9] This account of Kant's life and last years is based upon the reports of his friends and pupils, notably on those of L. E. Borowski, R. B. Jachmann and A. Ch. Wasianski. The latter has been partially translated by Thomas de Quincey in his essay "The Last Days of Immanuel Kant," contained in "The English Mail-Coach and other Essays" in Everyman's Library.

those who knew him affirmed that "Kant lived as he taught," and they all agree with the admiring exclamation: "If ever a man devoted himself to truth, expressing this devotion with his entire being . . . it was Kant." Thus it is that his life reveals both the greatest truth and the greatest error of his teaching.

According to the records of his life the impression which his personality made was unusually great. His character is one of the few pure realizations of moral man. He is equal to all the exigencies of life, his power of work is admirable, and his social intercourse displays that serenity and childlikeness which are the most certain signs of fulfilled morality. In the reports of visits to him, the comparison with Christ continually recurs. From the beginning, his influence upon people is very strong; without conscious exertion he always takes over the lead. So convinced is everybody of his importance that, in spite of the fact that he has hardly yet distinguished himself, his first lecture is overcrowded. Moreover, he knows himself what he is able to accomplish, and his works are very soon characterized by a great and inspiring certainty. In his first book [10] he already writes: "I have mapped out the way I want to go. I shall start my course, and nothing shall deter me from continuing it." Here he already attacks the most famous authorities of his time, Newton and Leibniz: "If one is in the situation of being able to persuade oneself that one may trust one's own reasoning, and that it is possible to catch Leibniz out in a mistake, one strives one's utmost to confirm this conjecture."

This strength of personality is intensified by his main works. When he begins his critical activity, he renounces

[10] Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte, Vorrede, § vii.

all outward diversions, and subordinates his life entirely to his work. His influence grows to unusual dimensions; from all over Europe, and from all classes of society, he receives enthusiastic letters; his advice is asked in difficult questions of conscience, and he is always willing to give advice and to help. His youthful courage develops into a complete and unshakable certainty. To the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* he gives the motto by Francis Bacon: "Concerning ourselves we remain silent; but concerning the subject treated here we ask that men may not consider it as a conjecture, but as a necessary work, and that they may be convinced that we do not undertake to lay the foundation of a sect or an arbitrarily contrived system, but of the dignity and welfare of the human race." [11]

Yet this exemplary life leads towards a dreadful catastrophe. The descriptions of Kant's old age are among the most pathetic records that we have of the collapse of a human life. It is understandable that he should have exhausted his physical strength. He was born poor, his hard youth weakened his health, and the enmity of the Prussian Government withheld a professorship from him for fifteen years, so that, famous throughout the world, he had still to overwork and even to struggle for the barest necessities of life. The University of Königsberg, thanks to his fame, attracted students from all over Europe, but yet he could not concentrate upon his lectures and in order to earn his living he had to be private tutor, librarian and registrar as well. Nevertheless, he makes important contributions to the natural sciences at that time, and prepares the foundations of his philosophic system in many books and essays. As soon as his living is secured, he abandons everything else and starts

[11] Francis Bacon, Instauratio Magna, Prefatio.

his critical works which are in even greater drain on his strength. Yet the last six years of his life remain a tormenting downfall. Even one of his most ardent admirers, who tried to hide the growing weakness of Kant from the world, writes when he hears that Kant has died: "I pondered on this event, so strange for mankind, that even a Kant had to survive his mind, and I was relieved and glad at the final dissolution of his body."

We cannot but share his relief and joy. Kant's body becomes so weak that he cannot hold himself upright; "he fell over when he walked and when he stood still"; and he already wishes to die because "he could no longer be useful to the world, and did not know what to do with himself." His mind is so weak that he is unable to judge his last work which he is still writing; at one moment he rightly regards it merely as notes, at another he thinks that it is ready for printing. He receives strangers with the words: "Gentlemen, I grow old and weak, you must treat me like a child," and soon he does not receive any strangers at all. But his descent does not end here. At last he can no longer write, he cannot even sign his name, he does not recognize his friends, he cannot express himself intelligibly, he loses his sight, his hearing and all sense of time. He sleeps all day, yet he has to be watched, because at the same time he is restless, and in this and other ways he betrays that he knows of his painful state himself. His death has in fact to be welcomed as a delivery.

This decline of Kant, however, is clearly connected with the flaws in his teaching, for it develops because he trusts his reason alone and not any of the other human capacities nor the spontaneous flowing of life within him. Thus the harmony between his life and teaching, at first an example and a triumph, begins gradually to turn

against him, and when his teaching begins to fail, this very harmony destroys his life and transforms the example into a warning. That the quality which made his life great should lead towards disaster is especially moving. In the same way, the exclamation of which he is so fond in his youth, "Give me matter, and I will build a world," at first a cry of triumph, can be interpreted eventually as an expression of despair, for, though they are still systematically correct, it is content which is lacking in his later works. It is everything admirable which contributes to his doom.

The extent to which he models his life upon maxims, and governs it by his intellect down to the last detail, is exceptional. The arrangement of his days and of all his activities, dressing and eating as well as working and teaching, become the fulfilment of a duty. He succeeds in carrying out perfectly his fundamental rule to act from duty only, and the course of his daily life is a moral action. But it is just because his actions are transformed into duties that they cannot be adapted to changed circumstances. In particular the petty practical affairs, the regulation of which seems at first sight most admirable, become rigid and meaningless, and gradually deaden his life. The killing of the spontaneity of the natural activities avenges itself, and as Kant replaces the natural richness of his gifts by intellectual formulae, he sinks at last into complete poverty of spirit. For the sake of his work he avoids even the smallest distractions and changes, and so, eventually, even the dismissal of his servant, or a change in the view from his window or in the position of his furniture cause him extraordinary alarm. He never leaves the immediate surroundings of his native town, and so he very soon feels unable to leave his house. He reaches his great age by struggling con-

stantly against his weak body; this age really is, as he often asserts, his personal merit. But it is just this age, won by the observation of minute rules, which becomes so terrible. The regulations with which he defends himself against disease are the cause of his pathetic weakness. His disciple and friend finally exclaims: "He was dried like a husk"—what a symbol for the end of a magnificent life!

But the 18th century does not dismiss us with the clarifying of thought alone, not only with the precise basis for an independent human life. It also gives to this life content and meaning. For the work and life of Goethe create an example for this new life which has to come into being—the example of a man who has been freed from all the fetters of dogma and who has to rely upon himself alone.

CHAPTER III

GOETHE: MAN'S NEW OBLIGATIONS

KANT and Goethe are distinct opposites—Kant, who concentrates on theories and increasingly retires from life, and Goethe, who prides himself that he has "never thought about thinking," [1] and who takes part in practical activities all his life. Nevertheless, their decisive basic attitude is the same, and they struggle for the liberation of man in the same way. The clearer Goethe becomes about himself, the better does he recognize those fundamental principles of his life which are in complete accordance with Kant's philosophy. He, too, knows the limits of human thought. He tries untiringly to find "the centre of nature and freedom," "the mean between nature and subject," in order to ascertain the scope of his freedom of thought and action, and to make all the results of his thought and activity consistent with the nature of the human mind. He rejects the searching for the "immense and inconceivable" [2] as decidedly as the "lively quest for the cause."

In his scientific attempts, Goethe endeavours to state "the relationship among the objects themselves," and never claims objectivity; on the contrary, he takes into consideration "especially the relation of the most important earthly object, man, to the others." [3] Goethe's scientific writings are an almost unique attempt to

[1] Aus dem Nachlass, Zahme Xenien.
[2] Dichtung und Wahrheit, 4. Teil, 20. Buch.
[3] Farbenlehre, Didaktischer Teil, § 181.

reconcile natural science with the theory of knowledge, and their fundamental principles could have been taken from Kant. "We find ourselves in the position of forcing upon experience certain ideas. . . . Afterwards, it is, so to speak, the task of nature to comply with these ideas." [4] And how important these problems appear to Goethe himself is proved by his remark: "The highest achievement would be to understand that everything factual is already theory." [5]

The same correspondence exists with regard to the moral liberation of man. The concept "God" is very important to Goethe as an image, as an expression of feeling and as a symbol, but he says: "As scientists we are pantheists, as poets polytheists, as moral beings monotheists." [6] The belief in God, therefore, no longer determines thinking, but conforms to human needs, and to be thus independent of God leads again towards a morality founded upon humanity. Goethe reaches the same absolute morality as Kant.

Iphigenia, who in the most beautiful way embodies the new freedom, refuses to do the deed asked of her because it contradicts the human law within her. The robbery of the statue which is demanded from her is sanctified by divine command; it is, moreover, justified by all reasonable considerations. If Iphigenia tells the truth she risks the lives of her brother, of his friend, and of the ship's crew, and yet she dares to defy the gods and to accept this great responsibiilty so that she may remain faithful to herself. She obeys neither the gods nor her own reason, but only her conscience. The longing for truth, for a clear conscience, for the right to feel grati-

[4] Cf. Goethes Sämtliche Werke, Jubiläumsausgabe, Vol. 39, p. 369.
[5] Jubiläumsausgabe, Vol. 39, p. 72.
[6] Aus dem Nachlass, Sprüche.

tude is stronger than all traditional precepts and all considerations of external circumstances. Life seems to her worth living only if it can be lived in accordance with morality. This meaning of her decision is strikingly emphasized. Iphigenia makes her decision also to test the gods: "I lay it on your knees. If you are truthful as you are praised for being, show it by your help!" [7] Belief, therefore, has become entirely dependent on the victory of morality; morality itself is already certain beyond all doubt.

This fundamental knowledge, however, which is a result for Kant, is the starting-point for Goethe Although it is later that he gives expression to it, and then only partially, it forms the self-evident and clearly felt basis of his striving almost from the beginning. It is only as he comes to realize this that Goethe's real work begins, and he starts to give to the new freedom, to the liberation from supernatural chains, a significance which is alive and intelligible to man. By the slackening of religion, by the decline of the Renaissance and the Baroque into the Rococo, European culture had become a chaos which neither the revolution nor the transitory Napoleonic order was able to master; Goethe, however, gives to this life, which is our life, a new order and meaning derived from man's own nature. He enlarges the sphere of the purely human in life and consciously sets an example for modern man. Kant's system of thought, which is still valid for us, is amplified by this example.

Goethe's conscious struggle to shape the development of human life begins with his journey to Italy. When he is approaching the middle of his life, he suddenly flees from Weimar, but he does not yet know exactly what it is that drives him away. Only instinctively do his

[7] Iphigenie auf Tauris, 5. Akt, 3. Szene.

thoughts play round the two fundamental pre-conditions which he needs to perform his task; he wants to become clear about himself, and he wants to get to know the culture, built entirely upon belief in man, of which Italy, as he sees it, offers two perfect examples—Antiquity and the Renaissance. But as soon as his stay in Italy brings the clarity he hoped for, his decision to give form to human life becomes equally clear. For his return to Germany, on which he soon decides, is not at all a matter of course. No external reason could induce him to go back. He had fled tortured and worn out from Weimar; only when he is in Rome does he enjoy his world-wide fame, only there, free from all material and official troubles, is he a celebrated member of a society consisting of the best creative minds of Europe. What could have driven him back to depressing external duties, to estranged friends, to the provincial narrowness of Weimar, if not an inner decision?

His return is undoubtedly a renunciation, the renunciation of all the advantages he could gain with the help of his genius. It is true that he gives up his external duties at first to devote himself entirely to his art. But he cannot escape these duties for long, and it is no accident that, soon after his return, his poetical activities cease almost completely for many years, in spite of his first intentions. He goes back to the sphere of his former activities because he does not want to distinguish himself from other people more than is absolutely necessary; he wants to live the normal and ordinary life. He renounces these advantages so that his life can be an example to others.

His account of the journey to Italy already shows some of the characteristics which are important in his later life. The extraordinary use he makes of time is particularly

striking. He writes about almost every minute, and in every minute something has been achieved. Conscious self-control gradually enables him to get rid of all fatigue; as soon as he is tired by one activity he changes over to another. Meditation upon the arts alternates with poetic work, scientific with artistic activity, reading with social intercourse. He even knows how to draw from the depths of seasickness some passages of the *Tasso*. Even as early as this he could have exclaimed: "My greatest gift . . . is that I can split a day in millions of parts by the quickness and variety of my thoughts . . . and that I can transform it into a little eternity."

This full use of time is as important as Kant's discovery of the nature of time. For time plays a somewhat strange part in our lives. If there is a period of time which we do not use, or which we waste on trivialities, time has disappeared when we look back, but on the other hand time which we have used well gains lasting value and gives more content to our lives. The length of our lives cannot only be measured in years; the same span of time can be longer or shorter according to our ability to make use of it. Time is, as it were, a part of our life which we have to conquer by experience, and the development of personality is dependent on this conquest of time. The more time is wasted, the less can personality develop, for the less do we know of our potentialities. Today very little attention is paid to this, but as we shall investigate the qualities necessary for a completely developed life, we shall have to refer again and again to this giving of content to the passage of time within us by which time becomes real. To do this as completely and as well as possible is, so to speak, the technical condition of the development of personality.

The fruitfulness of this principle is very soon shown

in Goethe's own life. If time has to be filled it is not sufficient simply to follow one given activity; if we do not want to waste time, we have to husband our strength and to fit each activity into our lives. On the one hand, we must know the relation of each activity to personality, and how to harmonize its special qualities with those of our own character, and we must know its secondary effects upon personality. And it is just this concern for the psychological conditions which is characteristic of Goethe's whole work. He gives, with every account of an activity, also its psychological implications; although they hardly belong directly to it, these implications are an essential part of his aesthetic and scientific writings. Indeed, while their explicit content is becoming obsolete, it is these psychological considerations which are the most valuable part of them for us. For it is here that Goethe creates, for himself and for us, the tools for the development of personality. On the other hand, this concern for time leads to an increase in the number of our activities, for only if we change from one activity to another can we avoid fatigue. Goethe cannot restrict himself to poetry and contemplation because he wants to make full use of his time, and so he is driven to painting, to collecting, to numismatics, to an ever-increasing number of branches of the natural sciences, and to his many official activities.

This endeavour to develop the mind in many different directions is once more a decisive factor in the conscious giving of a pattern to life. Any specialization leads away from it. It is not the mind itself which is guilty of that narrowing and impoverishment of life of which we are accustomed to accuse it, but its imperfect and purely intellectual development. If it is made to grow in a comprehensive way, our natural selves are not thwarted and

deformed, but strengthened and developed. Only thus can the danger of that development which took place in the 19th century be avoided, the danger of the destruction of life by an over-cultivation of the intellect. The simple "Back to nature" is useless and misleading, for the primitive, once lost, cannot be re-created artificially, and the struggle against intelligence, whatever form it may take, merely fosters stupidity. Only if it is developed in many directions can mind become so comprehensive and harmonious that it is able to restore, on a higher plane, the health of natural life to a being living in the sphere of a dangerously complicated civilization.

In this way, however, what is perhaps Goethe's greatest advance is made almost naturally. Ignorance of the structure of personality, the failure to develop those tastes and activities which are in harmony with our character, the gulf between mind and nature—those are the important, and in everyday life the overwhelmingly important, causes of frustration. Goethe struggles above all for the power to control man's life; he wants neither to change it, nor to enhance it, but to fulfil it, and so in Italy he already achieves the conscious and emphatic turning away from tragedy. *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the most perfect introduction to the new period of his creative work, is his first entirely successful creation of a drama which is not tragedy. With this drama Goethe's hatred of all that tends towards destruction and death is transformed into a creative principle. So long as a tragic catastrophe seems inevitable, any attempt to give a conscious shape to life remains futile; it is only when the conviction of the inevitability of tragedy is overcome, when the catastrophe can be avoided, that the way to a fulfilment of life is open. Only after he has rejected tragedy can Goethe live his life as an example.

Only now can the life of man reach its full development. The Renaissance had only half made the step from the supernatural God to natural man. Blinded by the magnitude of God, its representatives tried to raise man beyond all earthly limits. In order to pile up glory and honour, no heroic deed was great enough, no power wide enough; they had always to be surpassed until the strength of man too was surpassed, and so the tragic catastrophe became inevitable. In this way, in spite of its intention to value it most highly, the Renaissance time and again destroyed human life. Goethe, on the contrary, knew how at the same time to heighten and to preserve human life, for he renounces the absolute validity of the aim; he does not care for the deed itself, but for the way in which it is achieved, and it is not the achievements themselves which are essential to him, but the ability of man to give form to his life. Again and again he says: "I honour the man who knows clearly what he wants, who goes forward unceasingly, who knows the means to his end, and how to seize and to apply them; whether his aim be great or small, deserving praise or blame, I consider only afterwards."

Thus every man, whatever his gifts, can achieve wholeness. "The least man can be complete if he move within the limits of his own abilities and skill." [8] Any condition can be made to serve a valuable end: "By nature we possess no fault which could not become a virtue, and no virtue which could not become a fault." [9] Even simple things, if they present themselves in their completeness, are transformed into images of the wholeness of the world, for "everything that happens is a symbol," and it can perfectly reflect the whole. Even "the genius in

[8] Maximen und Reflektionen, Anhang.
[9] Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, 1. Buch, 10. Kapitel.

his highest form" is characterized by the fact that "he is aware of himself and knows his sphere of action." Every man in this way can live fully. He need no longer wait until accidental and external circumstances make great deeds possible, he need not venture actions which are bound to destroy him, and yet he is justified in feeling that his life is important and significant. Every man, whoever he may be, can be in touch with the highest, and he can fulfil himself because everyday life, which forms the largest part of every man's existence, is no longer despicable, unimportant, and irksome, but becomes, on the contrary, his main concern.

There are numberless appeals in Goethe's work to make use of the life which is given to us serenely, to live every day fully and joyfully, to seize every opportunity, to do everything energetically and efficiently, and not to despise anything, but to do the most ordinary things with the same seriousness as the extraordinary. He asks "What is duty?" and answers "The tasks of each day." [10] The rehabilitation of everyday life is the most obvious part of his conscious teaching. Nothing is more hateful to him than inactive longing for vague ideals or romantic dreaming. The greater guilt, so it seems to him, is to overlook the given task for the sake of such ideals. The whole of his work is an overwhelming paean in praise of life as it is, without any special transformation, in praise of life as it can be lived and experienced every day.

Everything that seemed boring, dull and unimportant before acquires colour and brightness, beauty and strength, fullness and multiplicity. Hardly anyone else has Goethe's ability to present reality as it is, directly, with the greatest sensibility and on the highest possible level, and still without any intellectual falsification. He is

[10] Maximen und Reflektionen, Anhang.

sensitive to the minutest vibrations and to the possibilities of this life in all its fullness. In pursuing distant aims, we usually let the immediate moment pass without paying attention to it, but for Goethe every moment becomes precious, for in it we can experience something, feel something, recognize something, perform something. Nothing is worthless, for every sensation, every thought, every action, even if they do not contribute at all to outward success, may lay the foundations of a life which is consciously shaped and directed. Not in the extraordinary but in the ordinary things of life are the highest possibilities to be found. "If you want to go into infinity, go within the finite in all directions." [11]

This very emphasis upon everyday life is the only possible salvation for us today. Any escape from everyday life is closed to the overwhelming majority of men, for under normal conditions hardly one man in a thousand has any opportunity of living a life made interesting by external experiences, or of distinguishing himself by great deeds. Only if the normal daily life acquires meaning and importance can life become worth living again.

At the same time, we are saved from the fear that this life may shrink into a comfortable narrowness, or that it may degenerate into sensuality or senseless industry, for if we follow Goethe this life has to conform to his dictum that "Man's merit does not consist in moderated, but in controlled strength." Thus this life is both given a strong impulse and kept within bounds, because it is held in tension between two extremes.

On the one hand, Goethe, as we have seen, understands the moral nature of man, and he is always conscious of its beauty. He knows that the perfection of

[1] Sprüche in Reimen, Gott, Gemüt und Welt.

man has to be a moral perfection, for morals are an essential part of man, and therefore, because he asks for wholeness, morals cannot be neglected. His glorification of life is at the same time a glorification of goodness, of gratitude, of reverence and of love, and all the abstract commands of morality are made real and living in his work. Yet on the other hand, he struggles for the giving of content to time, of which we have spoken, and man, therefore, has to be not only good but active. He must combine an eager activity with purity, with warmheartedness and with love.

This is a task which requires at the same time unusual strength and restraint. For morality and the full use of time lead in different directions. Concern with morality easily leads man away from the external experiences of life into its depths, and the concern with the giving of content to the passage of time points towards the surface, the broadening of life. To comply with the demands of both, therefore, requires the greatest effort. If, however, man is successful in this, the realization of his highest possibilities is certain, for if morality pervades his whole life without restricting it, and if, in this way, time is not only completely but also rightly used, man has really achieved wholeness.

The solution of this problem becomes possible, because the concept of single actions is replaced by that of a general activity. If we concentrate our attention upon a performance of a single deed those periods of time which do not go to its preparation become worthless; we despise men who are not equal to it, and dismiss everyday life as unimportant. Only by that activity which has to be carried out step by step is a constant tension created, and only for such an activity are the smallest things as important as the greatest. All that Goethe

demands can be achieved because nothing can be despised or dismissed as unimportant.

Goethe's dedication of himself to a general activity, which we remark everywhere in his life, may be said to represent the second decisive step which he takes, for by it he destroys the most dangerous obstacle which the Renaissance had created, the belief that human nature cannot be changed. It is only this possibility of change which justifies his teaching and example, for only if man can change can he be asked to achieve something new. A comprehensive education of man becomes possible and the lesson of the "untragic drama" can be consolidated by the novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* which shows the conscious development and cultivation of personality.

The effects which arise from the concept of a general activity become visible when we compare them with those which spring from a concentration upon single deeds.

There are in every man various possible ways of reacting to external demands. Most of these possibilities remain latent, for disposition and habit combine to create and to strengthen our special kind of reaction which slowly becomes rigid and unchangeable, and this bias towards a fixed reaction forms the character. If man is expected to perform great deeds and to make sudden isolated decisions, it is natural that this character should be all-important, for there is no time for a change of attitude, nor would such a change serve any useful purpose. A man will be most able to act quickly and forcefully, if he acts according to a fixed pattern of reactions. The tragedy of the Renaissance in its concern with heroic deeds is based, therefore, on the belief that character cannot be changed, and its tragic catastrophe is for the

most part due to man's inability to learn from experience and to be wise save after the event.

A concern with general activity, on the contrary, allows man time to adjust himself, for he can experiment with various attitudes and test his unknown potentialities without great risk, the more so as all activities are made up of frequent repetitions so that a single failure does not mean that all is lost. He can grope his way forward, allowing conscious and unconscious longings to awaken within him, developing his dormant gifts and learning to cultivate new abilities. The influence of this development upon character may be small at first, loosening but slowly the fixedness of his reactions, and if an important decision has to be made too soon, this rigidity of character will suddenly reappear. But if he is not forced by great deeds, again and again, to forget what he has learned, his activities can affect his whole being, until his character and his reactions are transformed. They can affect it because, by this transformation of character through a general activity, man is really made free. Here again, Kant's teaching is amplified and brought into touch with real life.

Kant had proclaimed man's inner freedom, but the limitation of his teaching prevented him from seeing its outward manifestations, and he had not distinguished for our everyday life between those actions which are free and those which are not. It could even seem that his discovery prevented any such separation, for all external events, in that they are governed by the laws of our thinking, are seen as the necessary effects of their causes, and can be thought of, therefore, only as not being free. Even if we ourselves are the first cause of an external event, thought alone cannot prove our freedom; we shall always be able to discover something upon

which our decisions depend. There is a gap between the moral law within and the world without. Moral actions are demanded of us whether they are possible or not, but how they are to become possible remains undisclosed. Yet what use is our freedom if we do not translate it into action?

Goethe sees that to ask it in this way is to miss the point of the question. Our freedom is an inner freedom and, therefore, does not concern external actions as such, but rather our conception of them, and the inner use we make of them. It is incorrect to ask whether or not our action is free, for it can be both at the same time. Certainly, every event is determined by an inevitable necessity, but it becomes good or bad for us only by our interpretation of it, and the same misfortune can be either a catastrophe or the motive for new endeavours. The more willingly we accept what befalls us, the better use can we make of our freedom. "If man declares himself free, he will feel dependent. If he dares to declare himself dependent, he will feel free." [12]

This opinion, not altogether new as an idea, gains meaning and importance by the ability of man to alter his character. For of what use are all our moral exertions if we are bound to react in the same external way to all demands, so that all our deeds keep us enchained by our old habits? Only if our character, our pattern of reactions can change, can our inner freedom make itself felt in the sphere of real life, in the sphere of necessity, because only then can our interpretation of events influence our further actions. Even then we shall not act freely at once; we cannot escape by a sudden decision from the actions imposed upon us by the pattern of

[12] Die Wahlverwandtschaften, II. Teil, 5. Kapitel, Ottiliens Tagebuch.

reactions which we have built up by innumerable choices in the past. But, by striving in the present to alter our reactions, we can prepare for free decisions in the future, for if we change our character, we enter into the realm of causality as a different cause, and one which has been brought into being by our freedom. Our interpretation of events, by changing our own personalities, eventually changes the events themselves.

It is true that the interrelation of freedom and necessity remains a mystery. We cannot know exactly how the inner transformation takes place, neither how far the changes within us are projected into the external world, nor how far external necessity affects the world within us. But later experiences always show us the consequences of our freedom and, therefore, demonstrate its existence. When we understand how this freedom works, we can control the development of our character. In this sense, everybody has "his own happiness in his hands, as the artist his raw material." [13]

That the sphere of freedom cannot be precisely delimited is an advantage, for thus this freedom is not a gift but a duty, constantly demanding the effort to extend its sphere. "The tissue of this world is woven of necessity and accident; human reason stands between the two and knows how to govern them; it treats the necessary as the basis of existence, and is able to guide, to direct and to make use of the accidental." But this has to be learned, for "it is with this art as with all arts: the talent alone is born in us, and it has to be grasped and put into practice carefully." [14] This freedom, therefore, is only fully achieved by education, for it is not a means of comforting ourselves, but a stimulus to action.

[13] Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, 1. Buch, 17. Kapitel.
[14] *Ibid.*

Goethe, however, is fully able to achieve this freedom, because he is endowed with one especially valuable quality, which is extraordinary, but not superhuman, and which thus indicates the goal towards which we all can and must struggle. All these statements of his which we have quoted show that Goethe habitually thinks in opposites. Nature and man, infinity and the finite, necessity and accident, freedom and dependence—all these concepts become intelligible by the contrast between them. The education of Wilhelm Meister, too, is not governed by strict and exclusive rules; duty is supported by inclination; not a single teacher but a "League" direct the education, and every "apprentice" is exposed to influences so varied that even persons of entirely different character can be completely developed along their own lines.

This clarification by opposites is a fundamental characteristic of the way in which we think. We cannot think, for instance, of something bright without thinking of something dark, nor of something light without thinking at the same time of heaviness, nor of good without evil. Only if we acknowledge these opposites and use them, can our thoughts and actions become fruitful. Goethe sets out these opposites correctly, so that their usefulness is brought out. Usually they are considered simply as positive and negative and thus deprived of their full meaning, but Goethe knows neither perfect good nor complete evil. Even the negative in its special way has for him a positive effect, even evil represents a form of goodness. Mephistopheles says: "I am a part of that force which always wills evil, and always creates the good," [15] and these words are very important if we are to understand Goethe, for he is able to make the most complete

[15] Faust, I. Teil, Studierzimmer.

use of things which seem most harmful, and he knows to an astonishing degree how to transform misfortunes into blessings.

Nothing is for him merely an obstacle, everything leads to fresh deeds. He never fights against anything merely by negating it, and he warns us, again and again, never to be led into this. He always fights against evil deeds by confronting them with the achievement of good. In this way, the limiting of our personal freedom and the education of ourselves by the acceptance of necessity work entirely for good, for if we see all compulsion, all error and all failure not as a negation but as a positive discipline which can lead to new efforts, blind fate can be seen as a controlling destiny. If human strength is developed in this direction, our freedom is renewed by every impact of necessity.

The best example of this way of thinking, and evidence of its fruitfulness, is given in Goethe's scientific activities. He never follows the traditional path. If he meets a rigid division such as is to be found in the morphology of plants and animals, he looks for the unifying principle, for here the opposites are supplied by reality. In this way, he is able almost completely to anticipate the theory of evolution, and to make one of the most important discoveries which lead up to it. If, on the contrary, he finds a forcibly created unity, as in the theory of colours, he discloses the fundamental opposites.

In his theory of colours he displays a magnificent symbol of his own method of thinking. He starts from the contrast of light and darkness, of light and non-light. Which pair of opposites could be more easily identified with the simple opposition of positive and negative? Yet it is just the clash of these two opposites which creates the most marvellous quality to be found in real things—

their colour, and as all things which we see are coloured, it is responsible for the infinite variety of the visible world. This positive achievement, moreover, is due equally to both extremes. Light alone is colourless, and so is darkness, and only if they communicate with the help of a material medium, only if such a means causes them to come into opposition, is colour born. It does not matter whether it is light or darkness which prevails. The predominance of light gives rise to red and yellow, the predominance of darkness to blue and violet-blue, and who would dare to decide which is the more beautiful?

Certainly, this theory is not correct in the view of modern science. Goethe proves it with special kinds of experiments, and it would have been hardly possible in this way to discover the important invisible rays—the ultra-violet and the infra-red. It is perhaps only a symbol, but one which is perfectly expressive. Yet it seems quite possible that Goethe by his deep intuitive insight into nature has anticipated, here too, the future development of science. He opposes Newton's system, and this has already been replaced by the quantum-theory. Goethe himself points out that his hypothesis has a great similarity to the explanation of electrical phenomena. The quantum and the electron theories are being more and more connected and it seems quite probable, therefore, that in the end a common explanation of the phenomena of electricity and of colours may be found. Electricity itself, created by two poles which are given the names of positive and negative, yet which are both necessary and both active in a way which we can truly call positive, leads once more back to the scientific method which Goethe applied.

Thus we are given all the means by which we may fulfil life and give form to it. For constant and unrelenting

activity and education are forced upon us by the tension between those opposites, both of which have always to be considered but which cannot, nevertheless, be overcome, and it is this incessant striving which is the most important discipline for us. Our knowledge is not absolute and we have to recognize freedom gradually and by long experience, and so we can never know whether our aims are entirely right. We can be justified only by a continual striving, by a constantly renewed endeavour to reconcile our external actions with those inner laws to which we hold. Any complacency, even though it follow the greatest deeds, will inevitably destroy us, for it shows a wrong and arrogant belief that we know definitely how right and how good we are; it shows a wrong interpretation of our freedom and the beginning of the consequent destruction of our personality. For the sake of education Goethe now, even more decidedly than before, denies the value of the absolute aim and emphasizes only growth and maturity. "Everything which is finished and done with can no longer gain our attention. . . . Woe to any kind of education which refers us to its end, instead of making us happy itself as it goes along." [16] It is only because he strives unrelentingly that Faust can be redeemed.

There is, however, still one omission. The way in which Goethe arranged his life to fit in his many activities shows us in overwhelming and almost exhaustive thoroughness how we may order our own lives. We can learn from him how to use our freedom as far as the form taken by our behaviour and striving is concerned, and the best use of our abilities and strength, for he translates the moral laws into a practical and clear way of living.

[16] Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, 2. Buch, 1. Kapitel and 8. Buch, 1. Kapitel.

In this respect, he amplifies and transcends the discoveries of Kant. Now we know not only what freedom means but also how to arrange our lives so as to realize it. The world of feeling, too, is made far more alive than it had ever been before. Yet his choice of activities can hardly help us. All too frequently they are merely artificial ways of realizing his desire to give form to his life by constant activity. But the aim of our striving, the real point of our activity, is still unknown and here we cannot and must not follow Goethe. The activities in which he spent his time are only symbols, and very frequently they have an ambiguous, or even a misleading meaning.

The newly discovered possibilities of development in man and the new value given to his life on earth demand a new conquest of reality, a new perception and understanding of our world. Man could learn to live in quite a new way. This task is also stressed to the utmost by Goethe, for a large part of his artistic activities, his translations, his collections, his aesthetic and scientific writings and most of his official activities are directed, partially or entirely, towards the creation of a culture for which man's new independence has fitted him. But he accomplishes it only to a very slight extent. He develops in Weimar a culture of its own, and this culture, long important, but not always good for Germany, is a great achievement if one considers the means available to him. Nevertheless, it remains an entirely artificial creation, and few of the works which are created especially for it have a lasting value. Goethe's Weimar cannot be compared with any of the great cultures of the world. He shows how a culture ought to be developed, and the sphere of his artistic endeavours and the institutions which he sets up are such as are needed by a real culture. But they lack a sufficient basis.

This failure is best seen in his aesthetic writings. They are almost entirely obsolete because he ignores the immediate conditions which affect art and applies to it only abstract and eternal considerations, and thus he thinks of it as something which can be learned. As soon as these theories gain a decisive hold upon Goethe or Schiller, they produce only lesser works. The artists whom they both helped most, especially the painters and musicians, are saved from oblivion only by their connection with Goethe. The culture itself becomes completely abstract too, independent of talent and of the possible ways of expression of its time—that is, of all those elements which Goethe stressed when he was concerned with education and the development of personality. It is no mere accident that his greatest practical achievement in the sphere of culture is in the theatre, for here what has to be performed is given, and it is only the representation which can vary, so that here even an abstract culture can produce work of real value.

What Goethe actually does is only partially valid for us. His achievements are often made possible by conditions which he creates artificially, so that only the way in which he struggles is left as an example. Goethe overcomes his own daemonic nature and therefore he rejects exuberance and passion. He forces himself to forget that he owes his achievements not merely to restraint, but to the restraint of powerful passions. He cuts himself off from all politics. It is order alone which matters to him and which he praises unconditionally, be it the Napoleonic order or that of the Holy Alliance; he even goes so far as to prefer injustice to disorder. He is always a good subject, and is loud in his overestimation of certain princes and rulers. Only by this acceptance of the circumstances in which he finds himself is his immense

work made possible, and only because he excludes everything which could deter him from carrying it out to the end is he able, to a degree hardly achieved by anyone else, to set a thorough example of how to live in freedom. But we who desire to follow his example must not forget that we cannot accept these circumstances as Goethe did.

He was able to remain a good subject because the strength of his personality overrode the inadequate order in which he lived, but we have to transform an inadequate order if we want to live in freedom. If we are to interpret the symbol thus created, we must understand that his acceptance of these external conditions was an artificial means of avoiding any dissipation of his strength. There is no longer a princedom in the world which could be made proof against outside interference and transformed into an oasis of culture. We have to live in our world and we must find, therefore, a way of living which does not depend upon artificial circumstances, and this is lacking in Goethe's work. But, if we understand this limitation, we can accept the formal laws and principles of his life and the manner in which he strove.

It is by isolating himself from the distractions of the outside world, at the very last moment in our history when such an isolation was possible, that Goethe succeeds in setting the perfect example of how we must live. His renunciation is our good fortune. It would have been very easy for him, instead of working so hard, to play a far more rewarding part in political and artistic life, yet by renouncing these possible triumphs, he shows us the path we must pursue. A great dramatic or political deed could have roused a generation who found themselves in a similar situation to his, but only by

refraining from such deeds has he shown the way to all generations in every situation. But we must remember always that we have to accept neither his failure to recognize Kleist and Beethoven, nor his worship of princes, nor that "order" which he bought too dearly, but only what he achieved by these restrictions—the concentration of all his strength, and the completeness of his expression of his personality.

The easing of his task by artificial means was forced on Goethe as the price which he had to pay for perfection, and it can be recognized everywhere in his work. *Iphigenia in Tauris* is a perfect "untragic" drama, yet this perfection is due not to a new dramatic architecture and technique, but only to the fact that the command of the gods can be re-interpreted at the last moment. But this is a unique possibility in a single myth. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* overcomes a romantic type of construction with the help of the idea of education, but the "League" which gives this education is very romantic indeed, and the education is obtained by a typically romantic arrangement. It is no accident that this work was taken as their model by the romantic writers against whom Goethe struggled. His scientific writings, so far as the fundamental theory of knowledge and many single results are concerned, provide a pattern for the future development of science, but their method is not scientific, so that they alone could not have led to this future science.

The most striking example of this lack of an adequate aim is to be found in *Faust*. Faust himself embodies that unrelenting striving which is necessary, but even his last deed must not be accepted as valid in itself. It consists in winning land from the sea, but while he is doing it, he is unsatisfied and spoils it by the unnecessary killing

of innocent people, and it is only when he is dying that he deludes himself into the belief that the deed itself was his true goal. This deed is once more a wonderful symbol. Faust struggles against the sea—the daemonic and uncontrolled powers within himself—to gain purified feelings and a conscious humanity, governed by reason, upon which could be built a whole life. This is his last and highest aim and therefore the culmination of his struggle, yet it is again only a symbol. It is not the work itself but only its meaning which is important. Its symbolic character is stressed by the fact that Faust's glorification of his work is based upon an error; he thinks that he is hearing his workers, but really it is the digging of his grave. And he is not redeemed because he has won land from the sea, but because of his unrelenting striving.

Goethe himself feels that there is this gap in his work, and he tries to overcome it. Once, in his novel *Elective Affinities*, he grasps reality quite directly, and the characters are subordinated to it. In this way he creates a perfect work of art and what is probably the best of all German novels, but it leads to an inevitable and tragic catastrophe, which almost denies the possibility of man overcoming his fate by a conscious and comprehensive education.

Finally, with a fervour quite unique in such an age, he tries to correct this lack of real purpose which worries him most by renouncing even essential parts of his achievements. He tries, in *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Wandering*, to subordinate the personality of the individual to the community. Rightly divining that the age of specialization is looming before him, he rejects as nonsense any kind of general education. All the members of the "League" have to become specialists; "everyone

must be perfect in one branch of knowledge," [17] so that they have each rigidly to restrict themselves to a tiny sphere of activity. In contrast to his former demand that even the least of men should achieve wholeness, now even developed personalities are to be subordinated to ends which exclude completeness. With an overtone of pain which can be very deeply felt, he condemns even the theatre. Praised at first as one of the best means of education, it is now utterly rejected, and a very precious part of Goethe's life with it.

Yet all these sacrifices are in vain. There are magnificent passages in this work, and some parts of Goethe's teaching are expressed most clearly and beautifully. It is here that he dares to pronounce his only general and absolute rule—that reverence for one's own personality is the highest principle. This reverence is indeed the best safeguard against the wrong development of personality. It rightly directs our efforts, because it differentiates and sets a distance between our private predilections and the potentialities which are within us, and which we have to develop, partly with the help and partly against these individual peculiarities. We have to honour humanity in our own person as well as in others. But Goethe's real intention of establishing a community is not fulfilled, and the social Utopia remains a dead and empty symbol.

It is true that even here Goethe knows what is required of the individual. He knows that the new social order can only be founded upon the active and creative giving of help to others. Man "has to transform himself into a centre from which the common good can radiate . . . and save in order to spend. What is the sense in giving property and goods to the poor? It is more praise-

[17] Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, 3. Buch, 4. Kapitel.

worthy to behave as an administrator on their behalf." [18] But a social Utopia also needs external changes, above all a real transformation of the social administration of the world, and here Goethe takes refuge in his obsession with order. The members of the "League" have "to acknowledge every form of government," and to "exert themselves according to its desire and command." [19] Moreover, the details of the community made up by the "League" are never made clear, and so we always find it both confused and confusing. Thus this is his only great work which lacks form, so that uneven parts are artificially bound together, and finally the thread of the action becomes altogether entangled while important characters are left undeveloped and lacking in reality.

But when we consider the whole of Goethe's work, we see how little this failure means. We cannot and must not ask him to fill these gaps, for we owe his overcoming of the tragic view of life, his setting forth of a comprehensive education, and his unrelenting striving to this ability to create artificial conditions for his work. *Elective Affinities* is, necessarily, in sharp contrast with his other works, for as soon as he renounces that spiritual experience which lies outside the orbit of his art, he can only reproduce his own time and not anticipate the future. It would be wrong for him to succeed in *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Wandering,* for it is pointless to prescribe the external way of life for the "new man" so long as he is non-existent. As the conditions which make this new way of living possible only came into existence in his works, a narrowly limited aim, established by Goethe himself, would only have hampered its development. These inadequacies do not take away from the

[18] *Op. cit.,* 1. Buch, 6. Kapitel.
[19] *Op. cit.,* 3. Buch, 9. Kapitel.

importance of his achievement, but only show once more the tasks before us. The way in which man can most fully develop the potentialities of life is shown to us by him, and we have to put this method into practice to transform the world in harmony with this new conception of humanity.

Goethe's greatest achievement—the example of his life—is the proof that he realized all his potentialities and achieved all that was possible for him. For where else is to be found a life in which every moment is filled, even up to the day of his death at such a great age? Where else is to be found a life in which an immense body of work is produced and finished in every detail, without the richness, the sensitiveness and the fullness of that life ever being diminished? Who has felt increasing age so little as a burden, and welcomed it so much as setting a new task? Only five days before his death Goethe said: "I have nothing which presses upon me more than the need to develop what is, and has remained, within me." [20]

This full development of his personality is no accidental stroke of luck; this genius for living is not simply given to Goethe. In Italy he still complains: "I do not know whether I shall ever learn to live. Men who seem to understand it are very different from me in their whole being." [21] And later he writes: "Everything we do is only a tiring out of ourselves; happy is he who does not get tired!" [22] Goethe has to learn to live just as we have. His life, though on the scale of genius, is only a realization of the potentialities which are in each of us, and thus we can see them more clearly in ourselves. Goethe's life

[20] Brief an Humboldt, 17. März 1832.
[21] Italienische Reise, 2. Buch, Brief aus Neapel 26. März 1787.
[22] Kunst und Altertum.

is not a finished performance, but a coming to terms with the reality with which we are confronted, and so his example is as valid for today as for yesterday and tomorrow.

This magnificent example ushered in the 19th century, and the question with which the new century was confronted was that of whether the adequate basis and the goal which were lacking could be found in the sphere of the purely human. Our task is to discover whether this example was followed to a triumphant conclusion in the 19th century or whether it was debased.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROMANTIC FLIGHT FROM REALITY

THE Romantic Movement in Germany, the source of Romanticism throughout the world, rests upon the achievements of Kant and Goethe. It starts the new century fully conscious of itself. "Aurora has put on seven league boots," Friedrich Schlegel writes, "soon the whole sky will burn in a single flame, and then all your tiny lightning-conductors will no longer be of use. Then the 19th century will indeed begin." [1]

The Romantics are correct in their recognition that the most important achievement of their great predecessors is their liberation of personality, but this very emphasis upon personality is immediately exaggerated and distorted. Kant had shown that the human mind is not only a passive recipient of the world surrounding us, but also its creator and law-giver. To know the whole of reality, therefore, we must also explore the laws of thinking. Now, however, this new and surprising task of the mind is overestimated so that mind is considered not only as having the same importance as reality itself, but as its sole creator, and man is seen as absolute master of the world. Fichte's argument is: as it is I who think and recognize the world, and as of the thing per se nothing is certain but the fact that I recognize it, this "Ego" is the only thing which is certain. In this Ego object and subject become one; it is known not only as an external object, but also as an inner experience; I

[1] See Bibliography p. 297.

can have direct, absolute knowledge of it, and thus it represents the whole of reality. The Ego becomes the creator of the world, and objective reality is for Fichte only the "Non-Ego" which is artificially created by the Ego in order to serve certain ends. The whole world, man as well as the external reality, is determined by this Ego alone, and all idea that "the substance of our perceptions might be given from outside" is utterly rejected.

Fichte himself is frightened by the boundlessness of the prospects opened by this idea, and he soon erects new boundaries. But to the Romantics these thoughts are the most welcome, and while Fichte still speaks about an abstract "World-Ego" which could replace God, the Romantics believe only in the individual Ego of every single person, and thus in unlimited individualism. All that matters for them is the real and intoxicating power of achievement of the individual. "I am able to do what I want to do. For man nothing is impossible." This glory of man is presupposed without any misgivings, and his inner life, therefore, becomes all-important. "Within ourselves and nowhere else lies eternity with all its worlds, the past and the future." The human mind becomes the sole absolute power, and as all laws are established by the agency of the laws of thinking, it is mind which makes the laws without itself being determined by laws; mind creates the world arbitrarily, according to its own wishes. "Mind needs nothing but itself . . . for what I recognize as the world is its most beautiful work, its reflected image, created by the mind itself." Other creatures and objects "exist because we have thought them . . . we are the fate which keeps them in existence."

This sovereign arbitrariness of the mind is for Romanticism the ultimate good, and in order to maintain it the

Romantics try, time and again, to refute all binding laws and everything which might tie them down to earth. The flight from necessity is the common characteristic of all the different and contradictory trends within the Romantic Movement. It is for this reason that irony takes the first place in their programme, for with the help of irony the absolute freedom of the mind can be proved. In real life, man cannot avoid taking single experiences and objects seriously and considering them as real, but with the help of irony the mind can lift itself above them and express the consciousness of its omnipotence. Irony secures also the magnitude and infinity of the spirit which is excluded by necessity. The realm of the spirit is so immeasurable that no finite human being could ever exhaust it. If man wishes even to hint at the existence of this infinity, he must endeavour to realize the most extreme contrasts and contradictions, and in this he is helped by irony because it removes from everything all weight and seriousness. An entirely free play of the mental forces becomes possible, and thus the mind is enabled to jump from one of these extremes to its opposite.

At first, this new liberation of the mind from all restrictions is extraordinarily fruitful. A new world, inaccessible through the old concepts, is waiting to be awakened, and only a mind which is utterly unfettered can go on incessantly absorbing new objects and thus rediscovering the fullness and abundance of life. The stimuli which result from Romanticism are unusually numerous and important. The conscious ordering of the world is confronted with its unconscious background; the simplifying of the world brought about by the Enlightenment is replaced by the mysterious wealth of the senses and the instincts, of the heart and the soul. In this

way, old symbols and myths regain their meaning, half-forgotten tales and legends, surviving only among simple folk, are revived, and the spiritual life of primitive peoples is explored. By the recognition of the unconscious man becomes able to grasp the essence and importance of religion, so that Christianity and some of the Eastern religions, awakening a new emotional response, acquire new meaning and new life.

As the Romantics acknowledge neither compulsion nor a binding spiritual law, they are indeed able to awaken to a fuller life. Without distorting them by their own laws, they can accept and follow all modes of art and penetrate into their real structure, and they can understand and appreciate epochs foreign to them. The valuation by absolute standards which we find in Goethe and Schiller, which led them to falsify many periods, is replaced by a just appreciation. With the help of religion, the Middle Ages, previously despised and neglected, are recognized for the first time in their true significance as one of the great epochs of European history. But it is not only the significance of the Gothic style which is recognized, but that of the Renaissance too, and antiquity is freed from the wrong conception of Classicism by the recognition of the passion that was always present in it. Germany owes to the Romantics the translation and assimilation of the other literatures of the world, for the translations of Shakespeare, of Dante, and of the Spanish novels and dramas preserve to an amazing degree the peculiarities of the original, and at the same time the modern history of the arts and modern philology are coming into being.

By their longing to prove the breadth and variety of the mind, the Romantics are continually forced to look for new subjects. They turn to the Orient, to the Balkans,

to Indians and savages. They discover the beauty of landscapes previously shunned, of high mountains, dark forests, the sea. They look for night and horror as well as for loveliness and a new understanding of the mysterious, the twilight and the uncertain begins. Imagination is set free and fairy-tales, ghost-stories and the most fantastic inventions flourish. At the same time, mind in its playing with reality penetrates deeper, so that the investigation of national characteristics and a growing emphasis on them help towards the development of the nations, and social Romanticism and social Utopias lead towards socialism. All the discoveries of the natural sciences are taken up and developed by the imagination, and this has as stimulating an effect as the experimental invention of new philosophical possibilities. In this way most of the doctrines of the century, the belief in progress, the theory of evolution, and every form of the philosophy of history are, at least in a fragmentary form, anticipated.

The flight from necessity is, in this respect, a great help to the Romantics. These new subjects are for the most part unknown, and thus their real and necessary structure cannot be disclosed at once, so that it is impossible to assimilate them into an art bound by strict forms. It is only because the Romantics shun all laws and accept every subject just as it appears to them, even though this may be in its most superficial aspect, that they are able to embrace such a variety and wealth of new subjects. But this very quality of Romanticism justifies us in not dwelling on its positive effects. For all these stimuli gain importance only so far as they are taken up by those outside the Romantic Movement, only so far as the successors of the Romantics try, seriously and without irony, to discover their real structure and the laws which govern

them. Only when they are developed according to the laws to which, of necessity, they must conform, do these subjects produce lasting effects, and only then are these sudden flashes of insight transformed into something stable and powerful. Those of its results which have any significance, therefore, lead very quickly beyond Romanticism. We, however, in this study want to know what is meant by "Romanticism," and what has been preserved of it in spite of these further developments. On which elements of Romanticism is based that attitude which we call "romantic" today? We must, therefore, investigate its sources in order to gain more understanding of our own spiritual life, so as to be able, the more correctly, to measure its value.

Those consequences of the flight from necessity which become visible at once are the disastrous ones. Fichte's advance into the sphere of the unbounded introduces a falsification of Kant's system which is characteristic of the thinkers throughout the century, and which exercises a pernicious effect on their works.

Kant, in his first discoveries, was considerably in advance of his time. Neither he nor his successors can stop at those boundaries of knowledge which he had discovered; they cannot be content to leave the "thing per se" unknown. But whereas Kant reintroduces only indirectly and with the help of morality the metaphysics which he has dethroned, all his followers try to avoid this roundabout way. They acknowledge Kant's discoveries, but they all try to discover a single exception by which, in spite of the laws established by Kant, they may gain a direct knowledge of the thing per se. Only in one single case do each of them claim to refute these laws, but this one exception is sufficient for them to smuggle into the theory of knowledge a complete

metaphysical system. Fichte considers the Ego and its omnipotence as such an exception, Hegel an abstract concept of the spirit and of history, Schopenhauer the will, and Nietzsche the psychological knowledge of the Ego. All these conclusions are wrong, for it remains impossible to bring forward a complete proof of the exception, and thus they only introduce a new age of errors.

Fichte makes use of the knowledge of the power of the intellect to avoid taking reality as his starting point, for he asserts that reality must be such as we think it and that, therefore, every logical conclusion must be real, and thus he takes his start from thinking alone. Kant is always concerned with life and with the real world. Even when, in his old age, he loses himself once more in metaphysical speculation, he still struggles with concepts which, though overlaid by conventions, nevertheless refer to reality. Fichte, however, is the founder of a new scholasticism; starting from purely logical propositions, he follows them as far as possible, without feeling the necessity to examine whether they still correspond to reality. Thus he succeeds in constructing a purely speculative metaphysical system which explains the world in all its details, so that he claims to know the structure, the meaning and the purpose of the universe, without noticing that he has lost all contact with the real world. It is hard to understand how such a pretension is possible after Kant, but it is welcomed by the Romantics. Friedrich Schlegel blames Kant for what are in fact his merits: "Kant concludes with the opinion that, in the realm of speculation, we cannot know the one thing which is certain, the true nature of godhead," and he asserts: "Posterity will probably judge the spiritual greatness of this excellent man particularly by his physi-

cal writings . . . while his philosophical writings are inevitably doomed to fall into oblivion." But in Fichte he sees the beginning of the new era. Novalis says: "Fichte is the higher . . . Kant the lower organ."

Yet this boundless individualism revenges itself upon them, and grotesque metaphysical systems and uncontrolled and empty thoughts regain the power they had just lost. Schelling gives as a fundamental rule: "The existence of God is an empirical truth and the basis of all practical experience," and he meets all contradictions in a purely speculative way and by a forced logic. "As there can be nothing outside God, this contradiction (namely that there are things) can be solved only by the assumption that things have their source in that which, within God, is not God himself." In this way one can explain everything, without explaining anything. Schlegel and Novalis find that men belong more to the mineral kingdom and women to the vegetable, and true love to them is not a single flower, but a producer of vegetable nature. In this manner they can go on philosophizing indefinitely, and they finally believe that they know everything about God and ghosts, about the stars and the worlds, and about the mystical being of man. But in fact they do not attain to the slightest knowledge, and yet, from their lofty world, they look down upon reality with arrogance and pity.

The disastrous consequences of this way of thinking first become visible when, in the political writings of the Romantics, it clashes with reality—and this leads straight to the heart of our present situation. The Romantics are bound in these writings to make use of concepts taken from reality, but they give them an ideal meaning without concerning themselves with their real content. They defend, for instance, the institution of kingship and

glorify it in mystical terms, without noticing that the real institution has become decadent and debased and not at all worthy of support. By this they achieve the opposite of what they desired, because the revolutionary aims, for the sake of which they support kingship, are too abstract to become effective, and so their defence simply helps to preserve the debased institution which they actually want to abolish. The Romantics believe that they understand the absolute order of the world, and therefore ask for absolute power to organize the world accordingly; they put forward reactionary and dictatorial demands so that they may more quickly achieve their revolutionary aims. But these abstract aims are bound to remain ineffective, and thus it is their reactionary demands alone which have real consequences.

Fichte, in his *Speeches to the German Nation*, proposes a very revolutionary system of education, but when in consequence of this he is asked to draw up a plan for the new Berlin University, his project is altogether impractical and has to be rejected. Thus it is only the demand for a stricter use of power which is really effective in his speeches—a demand most welcome to the reactionary powers—and the slogans which help to transform a healthy national awakening into a disastrous nationalistic mania. It is very easy to behold the kingdom of God and in thought to transform all earthly life according to it, and it is just as easy to glorify the long bygone Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and to show off its paltry remnants in an artificial light. But the most beautiful programmes, however logical and consistent, are of no use if their components which have to be taken from reality have acquired a quite different character. Real life has a very strong vitality of its own and cannot be altered by the weaving of fantasies about

it; rather will these fantasies, though based on misconceptions, be used to support it. It is no accident that the wars of liberation against Napoleon, which are enthusiastically supported by the romantic revolutionaries but condemned by Goethe, lead to the reactionary Holy Alliance. It is both foolish and disastrous to take part in politics on the assumption that kingship is holy, that the Church is perfect, or that law is just, for their imperfect representatives will make a frivolous or criminal use of such political romanticism. Only the struggle to influence and transform the world can be justified in politics.

An especially dangerous aspect of this policy is the glorification of national character. Fichte starts by attributing "everything original which is not yet deadened by arbitrary regulations" to the Germans, and by denouncing everything else as foreign. He declares: "To have a character and to be German mean beyond doubt the same." As he is an abstract thinker, it is very easy for him to prove that the German language is the only "genuine language," and that the Germans alone are "truly a people." It does not matter to him that in support of this theory such typical German characteristics as the preoccupation with death and the passive acceptance of whatever seems their political destiny have to be stigmatized as of foreign origin. Similarly, Schleiermacher asserts that "those proud islanders . . . know nothing but profit and pleasure," and as "an admirer of religion" he can hardly bear the sight of Frenchmen because "with almost every word they tread the most holy laws under foot." Only "here in the Fatherland do you find in profusion everything that adorns mankind."

The Romantics find beautiful everything which they can manage to call German, and as a result of this indiscriminate admiration everything which is really Ger-

man is gradually covered with a thick layer of rubbish. Novalis does not even try to discover what the French Revolution might have meant to Germany, but contents himself with declaring: "The best thing the French have won by their revolution is a portion of the German character." The consequences which follow from the overestimation of the mind are paradoxical; first, by this overestimation the abstract ideal of "the German" is established, and then the mind is undiscriminatingly subordinated to everything which seems German, however inimical to the mind and however senseless it may be. While the claims of the mind become abstract and useless, the world which must progress grows more foreign to it than ever before, and finally the mind bows down to this distorted reality, overlaying it with sentimentality instead of transforming it. At the same time, this uncritical glorification of the nation must, sooner or later, bring its development to a standstill and lead to its decline, for if all its weaknesses are praised, it has no way of developing and improving, but is rather kept within its existing limits. Confirmed in its faults and overwhelmed by this false glory, it must lag behind other nations.

This, however, is but one of the dangerous manifestations of Romanticism. The Romantics are so intoxicated by their discovery of the omnipotence of the mind that, in other respects too, they will have nothing to do with reality. It is not only that in their philosophical writings they ignore the existing world, but that they always build up in their imaginations a world as it should be, without considering in the least whether this world of the imagination can be translated into reality. "Imagination is the highest and most original faculty of man, and everything else only reflection upon it." In all the writ-

ings of the Romantics the images of a Golden Age of the past and of the future continually recur, and they settle down in a cloud-cuckoo-land from which they can look down upon the real world with contempt. "I know how the world should be; it is not worth while, therefore, to know how it is." This flight not only from necessity, but also from reality, is considered as the highest duty of man: "A really free and educated man must be able, at will, to tune himself to philosophy or philology, criticism or poetry, history or rhetoric, the old and the new, quite arbitrarily, just as an instrument is tuned, at any time and to any pitch."

This attitude gradually destroys even the original and important merits of Romanticism. The Romantic Movement is not only a spiritual but also a very consciously philosophical one. There is hardly any other movement in literature and art where such comprehensive theories precede the real works, so that it seems that all these works are created in order to prove the theories. Schlegel denounces the "folk-and-nature poets" who despise all study and look for their salvation to the formless. Philosophy is for all the Romantics the highest and the essential faculty of man. "Without philosophy, the most important powers of man remain in discord. . . . He who knows what philosophy means knows also what life means." This consciousness, however, and this philosophy are directed towards the unconscious, the primitive mind, the feelings, the mysterious and the mystical, towards an emotional religion and towards the dream—that is, towards everything which can be in a good sense of the word called romantic, but which contradicts consciousness. And the Romantics do not try to raise the unconscious and the mysterious into consciousness, which would be a fit task for the mind; on the contrary,

the mind has to "tune" itself romantically, and the omnipotent mind is used to conjure up the unconscious and the twilight which cannot bear the clear light of thought. Thus a task is put before it which it cannot solve and the mind, compelled to produce naïveté artificially, loses the ability to distinguish the genuine from the false, and feelings or mystical or religious experiences, created in this way, are bound to remain vague and unreal. The Romantics are forced to create phantoms which are not natural and primitive, but simply lies. Worshipping indiscriminately everything which seems spontaneous and full of feeling, they themselves rob the romantic subjects of their value, and supply all the enemies of the Supernatural with their most effective weapons. The impression is created that everything irrational is only a deception and that it can be brought into being only by fraud. The knowledge of the irrational and mysterious parts of man, which ought to liberate him from all gods of clay, is discredited, for these false irrational creations are only fit to be attacked.

Romanticism forces the mind to commit suicide, and this effect, too, is one which persists. The cry of "Back to nature!" had already been dangerous, for it is not possible to deny the spirit once it has been awakened, nor to turn the tide backwards. Yet this demand had still been honest, for it transformed the primitive man into an ideal and only denied the intellect. The Romantics, however, do not want to deny the intellect; they make use of it to add to simple things an impression of the primitive and a mysterious power of enchantment. The Romantics consciously look for the attraction which primitive things acquire when seen through the intellect. But this conservation of the spirit for the sake of the primitive is quite impossible; one cannot, at the same

time, both preserve the spirit and deny consciousness and thinking.

The mind can discover simple and primitive things, but it is forced by its nature to understand and so to transcend the primitive state by steadily increasing the sphere of consciousness. The artificial preservation of the unconscious can lead only to the suppression of the mind. If the realm of the unconscious may not be penetrated by the mind, it can only be recognized by its being foreign to the intellect, a totally different sphere, and the more foreign, and even the more stupid and false it is, the more probable will its primitiveness seem to be. The mind, therefore, of necessity degenerates, grows confused and dulled. The overestimation of the intellect by the Romantics, therefore, leads once more to consequences which are paradoxical, for this tendency leads to the intellectual finding himself in the grotesque situation of struggling against the mind and bending the knee before a false simplicity and even before complete foolishness, throwing away his best weapons and trying in vain to subordinate himself where he ought to lead. The situation arises in which the cultivated mind, to which the naturally developed simple man aspires, serves to glorify the lack of intellect. In this way, the intellectual becomes disposed to accept any humiliation, to worship strength and stupidity and to betray himself in order to preserve what seems to be "the primitive."

Romanticism gives to all the adversaries of the intellect an apparent justification, for if the only task of the mind lies in the falsification of original primitivity, and if the intelligentsia themselves consider this doubtful charm as their highest achievement, then the turning away from any intellectual endeavour is indeed the only possible delivery. Thus the most dangerous trend of our

time begins. We are in danger, not because we are too spiritual or intellectual, but because the intellect is cultivated in a perverted and one-sided manner. Yet this wrong tendency cannot be corrected by innocence which is always threatened anew by every scrap of knowledge which it has to acquire, but only by a comprehensive development and education of the reason, and this correction becomes impossible if the mind is only used to justify what is foreign to it. The way to reason is blocked.

The most conspicuous example of this wrong tendency is the romantic attitude towards religion. Friedrich Schlegel writes to Novalis: "My biblical project is not a literary, but a biblical one, entirely religious." But this does not prevent him from adding: "I feel courage and strength enough not only to preach and be zealous like Luther, but also, like Mohammed, to go about the world conquering the realm of the spirit with the fiery sword of the word, and to sacrifice my life like Christ." This is his "deadliest earnest," but he asks nevertheless: "Or perhaps you have more talent for a new Christ?" This frivolity is approved of by all the Romantics, even by the theologian Schleiermacher. For him, too, the most important thing is an artificial attitude of mind; religion for him means a "taste for the universe," and he admires the "virtuosi of religion" and the "virtuosi of holiness."

This senseless playing with religion is only one of the attitudes to it which the Romantics find possible, but the other is as dangerous. Where the religious feeling is genuine, as it is in Novalis, its manifestations are so hostile to the proper use of the mind that, not content with fleeing from intelligence, they heap abuse upon it. Novalis, for example, finds it justifiable that "the wise head of the Church is opposed to the insolent development of human gifts . . . and untimely and dangerous

discoveries in the sphere of knowledge" when this head prohibits "courageous thinkers from declaring publicly . . . that the earth is an insignificant planet." Religion is not served by such distortions and fears, and the passionate wrestlings with religion of a Dostoevsky will show how much more fruitfully in this sphere can an honest and self-conscious mind be used. The return of most of the Romantics into the bosom of the one redeeming Church represents nothing but a betrayal of the spirit, a cowardly renunciation of all their previous convictions and a despicable self-annihilation. It has nothing to do with genuine religion, for the spirit surrenders to those dead traditions which can only hinder the true revival of religion. The most dangerous features of the Church are strengthened and given a justification. The overestimation of the individual avenges itself upon man, for, as the "Ego" does not really create the world, and as this world is more than a mere "Non-Ego," man cannot bear his freedom when it is increased to licence so that he surrenders unconditionally when delivered by the Church from this false freedom. He who does not acknowledge an inner law has eventually to ask for external compulsion.

Naturally, these weakening and distorting effects of Romanticism are greatest in its proper sphere of literature and art, which for the Romantics are man's highest achievements. They elevate the artist to a level upon which he is "among men what men are among the creatures of earth." The arts have to be entirely independent of any reality: "The essence of the poetical feeling, perhaps, lies in the fact that man stimulates himself by reacting upon himself . . . and that he can exercise his imagination without external stimulus." And "the arbitrariness of the poet" must not acknowledge "any law

above itself." But this very overrating of the arts robs them of their value, and it is due to the Romantic Movement that they begin to lose their influence upon life and degenerate into mere ornament.

Even in the arts, the Romantics do not give up their claim to grasp the absolute directly. But the absolute itself cannot be embodied in any form. They are, therefore, immediately driven into a blind alley. They have to shift the emphasis from the content of the artistic form to its meaning and to strive for an allegorical form, an endeavour which must needs lead into the void. If a single event is represented realistically and explored to its very depths, a living symbol is created, for in these depths every single thing takes part in the essence of the whole, and so far as it discloses these depths it embodies the whole and can symbolize it. The Romantics, however, believe that they know the meaning of the whole and, starting from this knowledge, they create allegories to represent it. They do not transform a character, an event, or an experience into a symbol; rather does the fairy-tale become the highest form of art, and imaginary kings, sorcerers, plants and elements perform a fantastic ballet, in which they are supposed to present the world order. In this way, the point of every artistic creation is blunted. It can no longer, without any preconceptions, advance towards a fuller and deeper representation of the world, but is reduced to filling prescribed outlines with superficial ornaments. The work of art loses its autonomy and receives life only from a meaning grafted on it from outside. If this meaning is not accepted nothing remains, for its intrinsic value is destroyed.

Still more dangerous is the attempt of the Romantics to represent infinity as an essential quality of the absolute. Infinity, too, cannot be grasped directly, and so

they introduce into the arts a never-ending agitation of the spirit with which they hope to replace it. When their ideal artist looks down into the abyss of his mind so that he may draw up from it something to fashion into artistic form, it is "as if he looked down into an unfathomable whirlpool where wave after wave beats and foams, and where yet one cannot distinguish any single wave . . . where all the currents, again and again, whirl into one, without pause, without rest . . . a rushing and roaring enigma, an infinite, infinite raging of the angry and turbulent element."

This struggle must not be mistaken for Goethe's infinite striving, for the Romantics take over from him only what they can misinterpret in their own way. Goethe is perpetually impelled by the abundance of the world, by the many-sidedness of the human spirit, and by his need to fulfil the highest potentialities of our life on earth. He progresses from one fact, from one experience, to the next, and it is only because he cannot exhaust reality that he can find no rest. The Romantics, on the contrary, make use of reality, or rather of a distorted shadow of it, to represent a theoretical infinity. Infinity for them is an atmosphere to be introduced into the work of art, and the creation of this atmosphere of the infinite is their highest aim. But this aim also is directly hostile to the creation of genuine works of art. It is true that a complete work of art has a certain tone, but if the creation of this tone is one of the aims from the beginning, the process of creation is no longer free, the form has to be twisted and deformed, and the work of art is once more subordinated to ends foreign to it. For the sake of giving this impression of infinity, the Romantics must frustrate a natural development so as to prolong a particular mood, or they must break up the

form of their works so as to give the impression of incompleteness, thus excluding a consistent conclusion to their productions. Or they must retire into the realm of reflection, but a reflection which must not lead to any results which might bring the process to a conclusion. The Romantics look on reflective poetry as the highest kind; romantic poetry has to "hover on the wings of poetic reflection, increasing this reflection again and again, as if multiplying it in an endless row of mirrors." The endeavour of the artist is completely divorced from any obligation or inner necessity and becomes a mere attitude unsupported by any vital sanctions.

Allegory, the atmosphere of the infinite, poetry of romantic reflection, all of these lead straight to the perversion of art into an ornamentation which smothers life. As it is not possible to satisfy all these demands, Romanticism needs more and more trappings which, at least, give an appearance of success. First, they strive for an impression of indistinctness. "Who would not wish to walk in twilight, when the night is interpenetrated by light, and the light by night, into more intense shadows and colours?" This twilight, beautiful in itself, becomes unbearably permanent. Then hunting-horns drown the rustling of the woods, every step is accompanied by lute and zither, waterfalls do not make their appearance without lightning and thunder, the moon shines upon ruins and decayed walls, and moss-grown monuments recall past ages. Novalis goes so far as to consider the lute as an original human element; the hero of his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* "felt that he lacked a lute, without knowing how it was built and what effects it produced." These are the ideal subjects for romantic paintings as they are described by Tieck: "Solitary, ghastly landscapes. A rotten and broken bridge

over an abyss between two precipitous rocks; between them a foaming and roaring brook. Wanderers who have lost their way, with garments fluttering in the wet wind; the terrible figures of robbers coming out of a defile; attacked and plundered carriages, a struggle with the travellers. . . . Brook and waterfall, with the fisherman, the angle, and the mill turning in the moonlight." Poetry, and human life too, are drowned in vague moods. Once more, an important sphere of human endeavour has been transformed into one of meaningless amusement.

Thus by endangering every genuine feeling, romantic art eventually becomes dangerous to life itself. Man is forced by strong and genuine feelings to seek clarity and consciousness, passionate decisions and definite results, but the Romantics, on the contrary, stress the state of feeling itself. They do not want to follow it up, but to revel in emotions; they want perpetually to indulge in their feelings. Therefore they must make feeling weaker than it is, so that it does not lead anywhere and comes to no conclusion, so that it can become a permanent mood which is passively enjoyed. Longings make man thirst for fulfilment, but to the Romantics longing itself is the most welcome realization of a feeling for the infinite, and because it becomes their aim and must be preserved, it must not be satisfied. At the same time, the Romantics are aware that their intellect is stronger than their feelings, and they are always afraid that it may overcome their emotions. The conscious goal towards which man is driven by feeling appears to them as its annihilation, and they therefore sever the connection between the feeling and the mind. Feeling is weakened at any cost so that it cannot give rise to any activity of the mind, which might lead to a real decision.

The most serious and binding force in human life is thus degraded, for feeling alone can connect man with the absolute for which the Romantics strive. In this sphere alone, if a man is honest with himself, no definite shirking or lying is possible, for here every error makes itself felt in the end. But the Romantics thin it down until it altogether loses this power, until it is only another ornament gilding over reality. Human existence, whether happy or unhappy, is weakened until it becomes a mere indulgence. "Religious feelings should accompany every activity of man like holy music"—everything becomes merely a sweet accompaniment to speculation or sensation which can stimulate without exercising any compulsion. The revelling in feeling becomes heavy or sentimental, sunk in sadness and *Weltschmerz*; irony disappears in its expression. But in a deeper sense it is now that irony celebrates its full triumph, for human life itself has become formless and insincere, an empty allegory, an ironical fragment. It has no longer any connection with what is truly infinite, and the voice of the absolute is drowned in false sentimentality.

When the first exaltation has died down and reality, this powerful and ever-present reality which cannot be discussed out of existence, comes again to the fore, the Romantics are no longer equal to it, for they have destroyed vitality itself. Their arrogant contempt for reality is transformed into impotent hatred, into *Weltschmerz* and querulousness. Eventually, Romanticism manifests itself only as an inability to cope with life, and a complete decline is thinly concealed under an artificial pessimism. Following Novalis' example, the Romantics desire to flee this "pale existence" without having the strength to deny it completely. They can only complain: "What are we to do with our love and loyalty

in this world?" The ecstatic praise of the new century is abandoned for a weak turning towards the past: "The old things are in contempt, but what do the new matter to us?" For the first time, youth itself fights against the things of the future and despises them: "Lonely and deeply saddened is he who fervently and piously loves the days of yore."

The results of the betrayal of the spirit are most clearly and strikingly seen. The Romantics, because of their weakness, are no longer able to wrest concepts of value and purity from life, and so the spirit is entirely without influence. A strange aristocracy comes into being; the most lofty poets are transformed into brutal egotists; unable to live, despising the masses, and worshipping a secret ideal, they think that they are entitled to follow the worst customs of the masses. To do evil is the only way of proving their strength, and satanism comes into fashion. Other Romantics, following a different path, subordinate themselves to those who despise the spirit; adoration of "the German" and poetry combine in the mass production of all that doggerel which almost succeeded in smothering real art. True art, the spirit of man and life itself have been debased; they can be saved only by a struggle against Romanticism.

Certainly, it is true that this does not apply to the whole of the historical Romantic Movement. Only in its beginning is it so surprisingly poor in true works of art, but later many of its weaknesses are overcome by the Romantics themselves. To divide those whom we call Romantic so sharply from those whom we do not is to make an artificial distinction, for the Romantics frequently take over foreign elements and advance towards realism. Sometimes they base their fantastic products upon reality, and so can make them believable and en-

chanting. But those very characteristics of early Romanticism which are so disastrous have remained effective, and again and again, Romanticism has been renewed at these sources. The most dangerous form of Romanticism is more powerful today than ever before. The overestimation of the power of the intellect and the flight from reality into extreme individualism lead to an equally extreme materialistic reaction, and in face of this reaction extreme Romanticism appears, in its turn, as the only possible attitude for the spirit of man. The mistakes of the Romantics are responsible for both materialism and the retreat of the spirit into romantic sentiment.

First, however, the materialist reaction takes place; Romanticism clears the way for the overestimation of the purely material personality. Reality, neglected by the spirit, gains too strong a life of its own, and the deification of the hero begins.

CHAPTER V

NAPOLEON: THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE HERO

IT IS Romanticism which forces man, throughout almost the whole century, to choose between the spiritual and the material. The romantic betrayal of the spirit avenges itself upon man, for now it is hardly possible any longer to further that reconciliation of the spirit with earthly life which the Renaissance had begun and which Kant and Goethe had almost completed; the ideal and the real are altogether estranged. The human mind, whether it despises reality or whether it is searching for it, has lost contact with the world, and those men who feel themselves inextricably involved in real life have no alternative but to surrender unconditionally to the purely material. This does not imply the exclusion of the intellect; it is possible to exercise great intellectual powers in the sphere of reality, but the mind has to subordinate itself to practical ends and no longer explores the spiritual aspects of reality which would help it to govern and transform the world. It has to be content with performing the tasks of the moment, so that it becomes the servant instead of the master who chooses the right means to his own ends. Thus it is no mere accident that the practical genius of Napoleon has the power to overwhelm romantic Europe.

Napoleon may stand for the complete opposite of Romanticism.[1] He is the man who can seize every op-

[1] See Bibliography p. 297.

portunity wherever it presents itself, without hesitation or reservation, the man for whom nothing is so small as to be insignificant, nothing so great as to be impossible, the man who is equal to all the demands of life. He functions with an immense sureness and so long as he does not misunderstand or abuse his genius, there is hardly a situation which he cannot master.

While still an unknown general, he secured power and respect for an insecure government with a single blow. Shortly afterwards he succeeded easily and quickly in reorganizing a hungry, corrupted and disintegrating army, and by inflaming the soldiers with enthusiasm, he transformed it into such an efficient weapon that it could defeat a far superior and seemingly unconquerable power. His new strategy and tactics were flawless from the very beginning. Yet it was not only in battle, but also in every political emergency, that he knew immediately and without any hesitation what he had to do. His mastery of mass psychology, by which he steadily and unswervingly opened his way to power, was almost uncanny. He never overreached himself, and when he seized power he was already so strong that it was certain he could no longer be overthrown.

Once in power, he proved his enormous organizing ability. With unbelievable speed he thoroughly reorganized a disordered state and an impotent administration, and a body of inefficient and helpless officials was suddenly replaced by a system which functioned faultlessly. The finances, which had shortly before been completely bankrupt and without any conceivable hope of recovery, soon gave him the immense surplus which he continually needed. In a few years the first modern code of law was created, one which still serves as a model today. The last remnants of the Middle Ages, which

even the revolution did not touch, disappeared. At the same time, the armies of powerful enemies, which again and again stormed the frontiers, were repulsed, while he raised armies almost literally from nothing. There were of course some failures too, but no failure could endanger the final success. Even the campaign in Egypt was weathered without extreme difficulty.

What surprises us most is his incomprehensible many-sidedness. Without ever losing the general view, he was aware of the smallest detail in the army. He led his men into battle and controlled supplies; he organized Italy, France, Egypt, the whole Continent; he took part in the drafting of every paragraph of the Code Napoléon; he presided over the meetings of the State Council from which its members "never parted without having learned something new." All his ministers received detailed instructions from him; he controlled the press and himself wrote articles for the newspapers; he successfully concluded diplomatic negotiations, sometimes in all sincerity, more often as a great actor, but always the equal of all the trained diplomats. He made the Church and the educational system his care; he reorganized art galleries and theatres; he was familiar with the smallest particulars of his private household and he examined the state expenditure—and everything was done extremely well. His memory was amazing; he knew the precise constitution of the whole army, the whole navy, the whole state. On one occasion when, in a report, out of his many thousand cannons two in Ostend were forgotten, it was he who noticed it immediately and corrected the error. His capacity for work was equally amazing. A reliable witness reports: "He is able to spend eighteen hours without any interruption at one task. . . . I have never seen him exhausted." He dictated the

plan for the organization of a military school in 517 paragraphs in three hours without a single note. None of his collaborators could match him in this efficiency.

This ability sprang from his admirable self-discipline. He said of himself that the different subjects were arranged in his head in different drawers as in a desk. "If I want to stop working at one subject, I close the appropriate drawer and open another one. I never mix them up, and they never disturb and tire me. If I want to sleep, I close all the drawers and fall asleep at once." And he always succeeded in sleeping, whenever and in whatever circumstances he wished; he was always able to renew his strength. Again a witness confirms: "Never was there anybody who could concentrate so completely and who understood how to organize his time so well as he did." Thus he used his time to an extent which could hardly be imagined before. In 1793, while he was still only a major, the siege of Toulon opened the way to power to him in a disintegrated and defeated state—eight years later the First Consul concluded the decisive peace treaty which secured for France the first place in Europe and which made possible the reorganization of the state. Shortly after, on the 17th July, 1801, the work on the Code Napoléon began, and it was on the 21st March, 1804, that the code was finished. His contemporaries were already saying: "He has achieved more in three years than the kings in a hundred."

This complete domination in the realm of the practical is undoubtedly the positive element in Napoleon's achievements, and they show, for the first time and in the highest degree, how far the depth and range of man's experience can be extended in the present world. The extent of the sphere of the human began to approach that of the superhuman. Napoleon showed above

all the possibility which had been created by the revolution of rising to the greatest heights from practically nothing, and he showed it so conspicuously that it can never again be forgotten. He was predestined for such a career by no external inheritance and by no favourable combination of circumstances; thousands of other men were in the same position. His rise was made possible only by his special gifts, by his efficiency, his endurance and his genius. Circumstances, again and again, may be a hindrance, yet the demand that the way to the highest social heights should be open to all able men will never again be silenced.

Napoleon was the first of those obsessed and passionate workers who govern our world, the first of those restless men who devote themselves entirely to practical work and who thus enable men to achieve a new mastery of the world by man. The many-sided specialist Napoleon was the first of that type of modern man who, to a degree previously unknown, transforms the external world by human effort. It is understandable, therefore, that Goethe was deeply impressed by his appearance, for Napoleon seemed to fulfil his most important demands—the development of personality by a many-sided activity, the rehabilitation of everyday life, the performance of the tasks of each day, and that giving of a content to time on which he laid such stress. Man, freed from all cumbersome restrictions, seemed to aspire to a new perfection; it seemed now that human existence could take that form which Goethe's teaching had demanded, for this man was well equipped to attain the greatest efficiency. He was equal to all the demands of life, and he was supported by a mighty organization which he himself had created. Napoleon destroyed the last feudal, religious and legalistic barriers which hemmed

man in, so that all external obstacles were removed, and he himself embodied so strikingly this superlative efficiency that he will always remain an inspiring example.

This example of Napoleon, however, can remain fruitful only if we make one far-reaching reservation. The single elements in his life were magnificent, but they were only single elements, and he could not connect them rightly and give them meaning. Performed in this way, they do not lead to the fulfilment of life, but to its destruction. His example does not help to bring into being the man for whom Goethe was longing, the man who has developed his faculties harmoniously, but in spite of all the elements in it which seem perfect, leads to a waste of strength and an inevitable downfall. For Napoleon was a genius only in the practical sphere, only when he strove for single practical results. He was efficient on the scale of genius, but he was only efficient—he never achieved that harmony of personality which can only be rooted in the spiritual. Napoleon had no grasp of those spiritual values which must govern in a fulfilled life; he lacked definite and fruitful ideals, and he always subordinated himself to external facts. Napoleon's life as a whole is no example, but on the contrary the strongest proof that even a genius cannot make the best use of his life without having the right ideas and without governing it by the right values. Even the greatest practical genius—even a Napoleon—is cut off from life if he cuts himself off from the spiritual.

This assertion, it is true, does not at first glance appear correct, for Napoleon's way of thinking was determined by the ideal of heroism. He did not only seek immediate ends, but wanted also to achieve the power and fame of Alexander, Caesar or Charlemagne, to win the honours of a hero. He endeavoured to survive in the memory of

the nation as a glorious type of the hero and ruler. He always saw himself as a tragic figure, and in this he was in accordance with his ideal of heroism and not with the striving for practical ends. He said: "Truly great men are like meteors, they shine and consume themselves so that they may light up the earth." Yet this only appears to contradict the lack of respect for spiritual values in Napoleon, for heroism, in spite of its glory and honour, is not a genuine ideal, but rather an inadequate substitute for one. To remain fruitful, heroism has to be a means to another end; if it comes to the fore as the end itself, we may know that no genuine ideal is present. By creating the false impression that it is an ideal, the cult of heroism accelerates and completes the destruction of life which must be the result of striving for practical ends alone.

The heroic man is doubtless an admirable man. His animal powers are disciplined and enhanced by the spiritual, for his coarse natural strength is purified by courage and nobleness, by his striving after purity and honour, and by his readiness to sacrifice his life. He can thus acquire great moral beauty, and if this disciplined strength is used in the service of mankind, to spread a culture or a faith, to defend freedom of action or thought, we can only admire him. But we must distinguish clearly, far more clearly than is usual today, between the hero who fights for a cause, and the hero whose only aim is to be a hero. For between these two kinds of heroism, which unfortunately are called by the same name, there is a vast difference. Heroism as an end in itself destroys the original virtues of the hero.

Heroic deeds themselves are nothing but a proof of courage and strength, of readiness to attack and to use force, and of contempt for death. If an adequate pur-

pose is lacking this proof becomes the chief aim, and greater and greater deeds are needed to prove more and yet more courage and strength. Once again the whole world is made to centre round the individual, and again the result is disastrous, for this aimless and spiritually empty hero wants victory only for his own sake, and he is led on only by the fame, the honour and the power which victories bring him. The disciplining of his strength, originally a part of his heroism, is lost, for as it is no longer the meaning of the deed that matters, but only the danger and the physical courage it calls forth, the animal instincts serve him better than purity and nobleness. Hagen in the *Nibelungenlied* is right in despising Siegfried, apparently the greater hero, for his rejection of ruse and deceit—he who seeks only the great deed must also accept the most effective means of achieving it.

This kind of heroism, moreover, leads to disaster. If the hero seeks only his own fame, he must certainly excel his own deeds, for his fame will grow, not by the repetition of the same deed, but only by a greater deed, if possible by one which has never before been performed. He is thus bound, sooner or later, to attempt something which is beyond his strength. It is the fact that this striving is directed to an external aim which must needs make it tragic. Man is infinitesimally small compared with external reality, and if he tries to measure himself against it by external actions, he will never be able to accomplish any deed great enough. There is always the possibility of a greater deed still, and this drives him on until he destroys himself. Space is the best symbol of external reality, and it is space which most attracts every hero. He is driven on from conquest to conquest, but, even as the ruler of a huge empire, beside the uni-

verse he remains a speck, and so he cannot stay his lust for conquest until he is the victim of the infinite which he dared to challenge.

Only by the things of the spirit can man confront external infinity: it is the lack of the spiritual in this kind of heroism which avenges itself upon the hero. He wants to be powerful and great, he wants to be victorious, and yet he advances towards an inevitable catastrophe. He may be called lucky if he dies a hero's death, for then it seems that death alone has hindered the completion of his work, and as if death alone were the cause of his failure. Only then is he spared from witnessing the destruction of his work, and it is only then that his fame remains unimpaired. The hero who survives the hour of his triumph inevitably shows the fruitlessness of his endeavours, the emptiness of his false ideal and the disaster that springs from heroic self-deification.

The hopelessness of a heroism sufficient in itself is exemplified most clearly by Napoleon, for he was a genius, and so his downfall cannot have been caused by any lack of ability. He reached the highest peak of the heroic in our world, and yet how different would have been the effects of his life had he been moved by genuine ideals. Heroism covers but scantily the emptiness of the career of an aimless genius of organization.

We need only investigate more thoroughly the contrast commonly made between the young and the old Napoleon, between the republican and the emperor, to recognize the disastrous part which heroism played in his life. It seems that the reproach of having no ideals applies as little to the young Napoleon as does that of pursuing mere heroism. His rise was due to his defence of the republic and of freedom, to the defence of a country which was the mainstay of progress. It was the

rights of man which he secured for all the nations whom he liberated. All that can be said against Napoleon seems to apply only to the emperor who had betrayed the revolution and the ideals of his youth, to the dictator and the fanatical lover of power. In fact, however, there was no such betrayal, and there was no fundamental difference between the young Napoleon and the emperor.

In his youth he already used ideals as mere tools for ends entirely foreign to them. As republican and liberal ideas could help him to power, he had to accept them, but this, from his point of view, was mere accident. The ideas themselves meant nothing to him; he only knew supremely well how to transform them into weapons. He knew very well that "only if one appeals to the feelings can one awaken enthusiasm in man," and as the feeling at that time happened to be republican, he always spoke, when he wanted to rouse enthusiasm, of the republic, of patriotism, of the liberation of other nations. He knew to perfection how to express these ideas most inspiringly, but while he still wrote: "When I entered the public career, I made it my principle: 'Tout pour la patrie,' " he played with the thought of offering his services to the Turks, and while France was defeated on every battlefield, he worked at a plan of reorganization for the Turkish army. "If I can no longer be master, I shall leave France": this alone was, both at this time and later, his true attitude. Officially he proclaimed: "Let us swear by our colours: implacable war against all the enemies of the Republic!" But he himself did not intend to keep this oath, and in Italy he already wrote: "Do you think I care for the foundation of a republic? . . . That is a phantasm of which the French are fond, but which will pass like everything else. . . . The people need a master made glorious by fame and victory and

not theories of government." Obediently he announced his victories to his government, but he was thinking only of himself: "A few more such campaigns and I shall have secured for myself a tolerable place with posterity." With resounding words he declared that the conquest of Egypt was necessary for the good of France, but later, in his memoirs, writing of himself in the third person, he explained without hesitation: "In order that he could become the master of France, the Directorate had to suffer setbacks during his absence, and his return had to set victory once again on our flags." The good of France, so far as it was not identical with his own welfare, was a matter of complete indifference to him. His senseless sacrifice of a large army in Egypt certainly did not contribute to the welfare of France; if the government had had this army at its disposal in Europe, it would probably never have been defeated again. We are not astonished that even Napoleon's secretary, whose task it was to write down the truly inspiring proclamations, had to confess: "I felt embarrassed when I had to write down at his dictation those official words each one of which was a fraud." Napoleon said himself: "Whatever makes a good impression in proclamations and printed speeches, are tales."

The respect for the things of the spirit which he frequently professed was another such official tale. It sounded very fine when he said to the Academy: "The true and only conquests which leave no regrets in us are those of the spirit." It sounded even finer when the victorious commander-in-chief proclaimed: "There are but two powers in the world, the spirit and the sword, but in the end the sword is always defeated by the spirit." Yet he always exerted himself only for forcible and material conquests, and nowhere do we find any regret that it is so.

He always used the higher faculties of the mind to serve external ends which are hostile to them. "My mistress is power"—this remark alone was without doubt sincere. It is true that when he said of a general: "He has distinguished himself only by his courage," he meant it as an expression of contempt, and it is also true that his knowledge was unusually many-sided, but the spiritual always remained the means and never became the end.

It is most significant that he was never driven by an idea into the unknown. He always chose the old and the traditional as the easiest, most comfortable and proved way. He relied without exception on the forms of the past, renewing and adapting them to suit his purpose. Into the republican constitution he gradually introduced so many monarchical elements that it could soon be replaced by an absolute monarchy; he thought it most important to be crowned by the pope with the crown of Charlemagne; he tried to found a dynasty, and Roman Catholicism was once again made the state religion. As emperor he abolished all modern liberties; the federation of liberated republics was replaced by an outdated system of alliances, and his faithful followers received fiefs as in the Middle Ages. The "United States of Europe" which he vaguely planned had nothing in common with a genuine European federation, for it was only designed to secure for France the first position in Europe and for Napoleon himself the greatest possible power. It was in fact a new Holy Roman Empire, but this time of the French Nation. Paris was to become the capital of the world. A nobility, a court, decorations were re-created; suddenly there were kings and princes at an imperial court teeming with brand-new dukes, counts and barons. He had an Imperial Lord High Chancellor, a Lord Chancellor of the State, a Great Elector and so forth.

What did it matter that the Legion of Honour remained accessible to everybody as a pretence that thus the original and revolutionary possibility of making the highest career out of nothing was preserved? This recognition of all merit gradually lost its entire importance and became an empty symbol, a decoration among other decorations.

This renewal of old forms was one of the most important secrets of Napoleon's success. The new ideas of the young republic, which had to struggle along without any modern example, were still most imperfect, and their gradual perfection would have been a difficult experiment needing time and demanding sacrifices. By falling back, however, upon the old forms, Napoleon had old and tried measures for dealing with the situation ready to his hand, and so he was sure to bring relief in the beginning and to solve all problems comparatively easily and quickly. The old measures were in any case effective ones; they made an impression and they gave help for the moment, particularly as Napoleon knew how to make them most efficient and to give them the appearance of originality. Moreover, as he was always concerned only with immediate, material and practical ends, he was not disturbed by the fact that, in the long run, they were bound to prove of no avail. He lacked the comprehensive view necessary for such a knowledge.

His understanding was entirely confined to the past, never transcending the deeds of his models, the plans of Alexander, Caesar or Charlemagne. He failed to appreciate the simplest technical inventions of his time, and thought that the decimal system and the new metric measure were as impracticable as the steamship with which he could have defeated England. But he did not even understand the old ideas as they truly were. He

called himself a good Catholic and proclaimed that "religion belongs to all peoples and all nations" and no one was to be allowed to obscure it, but in fact he was an unbeliever, and religion was for him no more than a convenient support for the government. "Society cannot exist without inequality of wealth, and inequality of wealth cannot exist without religion. If a man is dying of starvation at the side of a man who abounds in plenty, he cannot possibly accept this difference unless he is told by a higher power: 'God wills it so' . . . Only religion, therefore, offers to the state a firm and enduring support."

It was, however, this unbroken unity of Napoleon's personality throughout his life, and the very fact that he honestly believed only in a self-sufficient heroism, which were his misfortune. He could have succeeded had he fully accepted the ideas which led to his rise, and his disaster was that he was nothing but a hero. It is very probable that a sincerely revolutionary, a sincerely republican Napoleon would not have been overthrown, for it was the revolt of the nations he had created which undermined his power and which eventually caused his downfall.

By founding the Italian Republic, for instance, he at the same time created a faithful ally. But how could it be expected that the Kingdom of Italy should remain faithful to its master when the promised unification was no longer attempted and small fiefs and "family-kingdoms" were cut out of the country instead? In this way the Italian people quickly forgot that it had a will of its own, and the later subjugation by its previous sovereigns was no longer seen as an attack upon freedom, but only as an irrelevant change of absolute rulers, and even awoke the hope of a new constitution. How then could the

people have risen spontaneously for Napoleon? The situation was similar in France itself, but here the returning Bourbons deceived the people, who therefore rose in support of Napoleon. For a moment Napoleon seemed to recognize that he ought to have relied on the people alone, but then it was too late.

The same applies to the treatment of Germany. He came to Germany when he was no longer of a mind to set up a German Republic; he treated her at first as a cheap compensation prize when concluding peace treaties, and later as a country which belonged to nobody and in which, therefore, he could most easily create the many fiefs which increasingly he needed. Certainly, it would have been very difficult at that time to think of a united Germany, but the possibility of a united Italy seemed at first equally fantastic, and yet, only a few years before he conquered Germany, the younger Napoleon consciously and with great cunning prepared the way for it. Venice was as proud and independent as any of the little German states, so Napoleon deliberately delivered it over to Austria. Thus their admission shortly afterwards into the Cisalpine Republic, which the Venetians had at first violently refused, now appeared to them as liberation and as the fulfilment of their most cherished desire. A genius ought to have foreseen the possibility of a popular movement in favour of unification in Germany; it was only a few years later that this movement became one of the main causes of Napoleon's defeat.

Even more clearly does the war in Spain show his shortsightedness. There an alliance was already in existence, and he had an easy opportunity of winning the friendship of the Spanish people by overthrowing the hated dictator Godoy. Instead, he drove them into an

embittered resistance by his imperialism and his lust for conquest, by his treachery and his deceit.

So far as England is concerned, it will perhaps never be possible to decide definitely whether it was England's or Napoleon's fault that the war between them flared up again and again. England was unyielding when peace seemed possible, and Napoleon destroyed these possibilities by exaggerated demands. But it is certain that it was not against France herself that England fought; she was ready to concede her approximately the frontiers which she was to gain in 1918; but she fought the man who wanted to conquer the world, and in this England was undoubtedly right, for Napoleon would have started upon new conquests whether England had been aggressive or not. Even if it were true that England would have attacked him in any case, Napoleon, backed by the allied European republics, could have withstood her attacks. If he had been aiming at a German republic, Napoleon would have been able to defeat Austria and Prussia, and the German republic would have been a trustworthy ally. In short, if Napoleon had really striven for that European federation with the planning of which he is wrongly credited, he would have become the creator of a new world, instead of a temporary master of Europe, endured with reluctance or with hatred. Then not only his fame, but also his work, could have survived until today.

All these mistakes, however, are without doubt due to his obsession by the idea of mere heroism. This can already be seen when he thought of going over to the Turks, for a hero must accomplish great deeds, whatever the cause for which they are done. For the same reason he sacrificed the army in Egypt without scruples when power beckoned him, for the hero needs power; the

greater the apparatus at his disposal, the greater the deeds he can achieve. The occupation of Egypt, however, was to some extent a sensible undertaking, although an invasion of insurgent Ireland would have been easier and would have served the same purpose better. But as soon as he was in Egypt, the dream of heroism led him altogether astray. Fascinated by the example of Alexander, he risked going to Syria and embarked on a campaign which endangered everything he had won and which, even if successful, could never have led to that conquest of India for which he longed.

He risked this campaign and later ones because the hero must conquer space. If the hero is to be the centre of the world, then the world must be subjugated by him, and as he does not know of other than external aims, he can be satisfied only by the conquest of actual territory. It is for the same reason that he made the decisive mistake of crowning himself emperor, for the hero looks only upon himself and has lost any sense of a social community, and he cannot bear that there shall be anything higher than himself, neither the freedom of the people nor even the mere titles of other emperors. Having no knowledge of any intrinsic value, he needs external confirmation of his greatness. How, when it was within his grasp, could Napoleon renounce such an outward addition to his dignity? Far from renouncing them, he could not do without all those external forms which contributed to his doom—the nobility, the court, the decorations—for he needed to found a dynasty, to look for outward instead of spiritual immortality.

This domination for the sake of domination, however, must lead to the revolt of those who are dominated, a revolt which could have been prevented had they been appealed to by a genuine ideal. The desire for an im-

possibly great deed, the attraction exercised by the vast spaces of the map, the exaltation of the idea of imperialism and Alexander's dream of the conquest of India —all eventually led to the senseless campaign against Russia, which brought Napeoleon to the boundaries of a megalomania which finally destroyed him. This campaign was quite unjustifiable, for, owing to the dispersal of his forces, even complete success would have been dangerous to the victor. Napoleon said that only the defence of his honour forced him into this war, but this justification does no more than lay bare the utter senselessness of the concept of heroic honour. By covering even his most exaggerated demands and making it impossible for him to correct them by reasonable insight, it deprives the hero of any possibility of attaining to self-knowledge. Even Stendhal, who said of himself: "The love of Napoleon is the only passion left to me," was forced to recognize that "the success of thirteen and a half years transformed Alexander the Great into a madman. An honourable career of greatness of the same duration produced in Napoleon the same madness." It also became clear to him that only a hero's death could have saved Napoleon, and he continues: "The sole difference is that the Macedonian hero was lucky enough to die. What fame as a conqueror would Napoleon have left behind him, if he had been hit by a bullet on the night of the battle on the banks of the Moskva!"

Napoleon's downfall shows indeed how empty he had become. In defeat he again and again rejected acceptable peace offers, caring nothing for France, nor his practical work, but only for his glory and honour. He entirely failed to grasp what had happened, and even when all was lost, he still begged for a few more soldiers, still believing, even after Elba, that with a few more soldiers

he could have been victorious, and that with a few victories everything could have been saved. Heroic honour also prevented him from committing suicide, for this would have been an admission of final defeat, and so blinded was he that up to the very last moment he thought that he could re-establish his heroic glory. For the same reason he did not escape to America, for this could have appeared as cowardice. Had he done it, it would also have shown that the devotion to heroism had left intact some other meaning in his life. Instead, he surrendered to an enemy who, after Elba, had no choice but to deport him and keep him under close guard. The last remnants of his practical knowledge spent, he clung to the original idea of heroism, to the conception, long superseded by wars on a national scale, of a chivalrous duel, and he overlooked the fact that, if he broke out once more, not a duel but a European war demanding hundreds of thousands of victims would follow.

Unconsciously it was the very martyrdom he thus accepted which was most welcome to him. It was a substitute for the hero's death which he missed, a substitute which could perhaps still contribute to his fame. Thus the ghastly comedy of St. Helena began, where a tiny suite was forced by severe etiquette to keep up the pretence of a great court with its attendant petty jealousies and intrigues. The master of Europe exhausted his strength in a ridiculous warfare with the governor and his own suite, a warfare which was as unpleasant as it was disgraceful. He had no reserves of spirit left, and so he now succumbed to the smallest trifle. The tragedy of defeat was followed by a satire performed by an irritable invalid. The curtain fell at least six years too late.

St. Helena offered Napoleon a last and wonderful chance. He wrote his memoirs and had, therefore, an op-

portunity of clarifying the experiences of his extraordinary life, of judging his own career, of recognizing his mistakes and correcting them in the light of later knowledge. Elba and the hundred days offered an almost perfect cause for the exercise of self-scrutiny. In St. Helena he could have crowned his life of action by a work of wisdom. But it is just these memoirs which complete the proof that self-sufficient heroism inhibits any inner development. Napoleon wrote in order to bring about the return of his son to the throne; he wanted to justify himself and did not shrink from lies if by them he could magnify his deeds, and so he repeated all his mistakes and, without knowing it, accused himself. He took away whatever power he might have had as an example by exposing himself far more than could have been done by anybody else. The memoirs prove that this kind of heroism cuts man off from life so entirely that he sees everything wrongly and is altogether unable to learn from his experience.

The memoirs are excellent in all those passages where Napoleon can show once more his extraordinary technical knowledge: in the reports of battles for instance, where praise and blame is fairly distributed between his own army and that of the enemy, or in the description of the conquered countries, where he shows an amazing knowledge of the smallest particulars, or in the explanations of his method of administration. But he is completely at a loss when he comes to what should be his main theme, the interpretation of his own life. He talks very frequently about fate and about his destiny, but he is quite unable to understand it, and he sees every failure as due to some trivial and meaningless accident. He sees nothing as a necessary effect of previous actions, but tries with innumerable reservations to rob real events of their

importance. It is true that he says once: "Nobody is guilty of my downfall but I myself. I alone was my greatest enemy, the author of my fate." But this is no more than the excuse of a hero who wants neither to acknowledge his defeat, nor to recognize any authority above himself. It is obvious that he does not know why this remark is true, for he fails to see the way in which he caused his own downfall. But for this very reason his memoirs, more than anything else, prove that his fate has a meaning for us and that his end was inevitable.

We find in the memoirs nothing but praise for the betrayal of the republic and his cynical exploitation of the enthusiasm for it to further his own rise to power. He emphasizes that the Egyptian campaign was planned for his own advantage and overlooks its uselessness, and he praises his greatest mistake, his coronation as emperor, as an act of wisdom. How then could he have done anything to prevent his fall? So thoroughly has he forgotten his own rise to power that he once mentions as a proof of inefficiency that one of his subordinates had been promoted from colonel to general within three months. How then could he any longer choose the right man for the right place? If something particularly disturbs him, such as the execution of the Duke of Enghien, the Peninsular war, the separation from Josephine or the Russian campaign, he blames Talleyrand, Davout or some other subordinate for it. How then could he have learnt from his mistakes? He overrates enormously the dynasty he had tried to found; when talking of his first marriage he says: "If he had had a son, he would never have lost his throne"; the dynasty has become for him a senseless superstition. He could quite easily have adopted his stepson whose abilities had often been proved, but then "the blood of a Beauharnais and not that of Na-

poleon would have come to power." He worshipped disastrous unrealities instead of remembering those principles of equality to which he owed his rise from nothing, and which could have made it sound and honourable.

He has lost any measure of the real world or of his own importance. He boasts that he "has fastened kings to their thrones" and accuses them of responsibility for his expulsion which, he says, prepared "the separation of the peoples from their sovereigns," but this does not prevent him from talking at the same time about the United States of Europe as the liberation of the nations, while nevertheless still regarding it illogically as a glorification of France which would have been envied her by other nations. He declares indignantly: "They dared to say to the Emperor that the soldiers were of the opinion that they had fought at first for the republic and for their country, but now only for one man and his personal interests and immoral ambitions—nothing but miserable excuses and lies!" Up to the very last moment he has not the slightest suspicion that there might be some truth in this; he can say quite sincerely of his defeat: "What a misfortune for France and for Europe!" When he left his troops during the retreat from Moscow, he issued, in order to calm them, a bulletin saying that "the health of His Majesty has never been better," and in his memoirs he still finds this bulletin right and clever. Earlier, he had explained his difficulties ironically: "Take Alexander: after he had conquered Asia, he had himself proclaimed the son of Jupiter. . . . But if I were to declare myself the son of God the Father . . . every fishwife would laugh at me." But now he says in earnest: "In China the sovereign is worshipped as a god, and thus it must be." He is very near now to declaring himself the son of God the Father, for, referring to his own

martyrdom, he says several times: "If Christ Jesus had not died on the cross, he would not be the Son of God." It is no accident that he writes his memoirs in the third person, speaking of himself as "the Emperor"; he has become for himself a lifeless fetish.

Even in his memoirs, Napoleon's campaigns appear as nothing but a senseless and aimless warfare which must go on until he destroys himself. The Egyptian and the Russian campaigns are as much praised as his real triumphs; of the Russian campaign he says: "It was the most beautiful and the most skilled campaign, the best in leadership and method . . . of all the campaigns which Napoleon as commander-in-chief had conducted," and even the battle of Waterloo is viewed in a similar way. But of what use could victories and defeats be to a man who altogether failed to understand the whole situation? Even in the memoirs he still claims that but for malicious accidents and the mistakes of others he could have redressed the situation after the fall of Paris. As we read, therefore, it becomes more and more inconceivable that the empire could ever have been consolidated, for war has become an end in itself and is, as throughout his life Napoleon frequently emphasized, his real profession.

It is true that Napoleon talks in his will of peace, but he does it so awkwardly that we know at once that he wants to deceive Europe for the sake of his son. This hollow appeal for peace only serves to underline the essential element of senseless and brutal contempt for human lives inherent in this kind of heroism. After the fall of Toulon, the young Napoleon had already written: "We can celebrate our victory in one way only. Tonight 213 rebels will be sent to the other world. Farewell, my friend. Tears of joy fill my eyes and flood my soul."

The emperor always demands death sentences, hardness and cruelty from his brothers. In the memoirs such remarks as "The entire Croatian battalion was slaughtered," "Four to five hundred men were mown down," "Eight hundred men were shot in summary justice," or "Everybody who resisted was massacred" keep on recurring with no sign of regret. When Napoleon wants to impress the Austrian archduke Charles, he implores him not to sacrifice another human life, and he reproaches England for the blood which had been shed, but on the occasion of the rebellion in Paris he boasts: "It was very difficult to wrest from Barras the order for the shooting," and of Venice he claims that its public affairs had so much deteriorated because it had not waged war for three generations. Of what use is it then for him to stress time and again that he has never committed a crime, and to emphasize by contrast the crimes of the revolution? His senseless wars demanded far more victims than the revolution; in Egypt he leaves 27,000, in Spain 300,000 casualties; the Russian campaign demands half a million victims from France and her allies alone, though, as he mentions in excuse, "only 50,000 Frenchmen." It is to him that the constant increase in size of modern armies is due, and from his time onwards the decision in war is bought by the sacrifice of many more victims, for it was he who discovered how well a hero can employ masses. Even the memoirs disclose nothing to balance this continual slaughter, and the final result of his career, therefore, is that France after all his campaigns is smaller than it had been after the revolution—and for this about four million lives have been sacrificed.

This is the most important argument against the ideal of self-sufficient heroism—it must lead to slaughter. The greatest victory which man can win is over another man,

for any other can be gained by his opponent as well. The hero, therefore, must measure himself directly against his opponent, and thus, even in the most chivalrous duel, the death of one's adversary can hardly be avoided. It becomes inevitable as soon as the striving for ever greater deeds leads to the struggle for power, for then the hero will always need to take human lives in his hands. This very fact deadens the hero inwardly; to kill human beings he must harden himself, he must suppress the inner voice which protests, he must become cruel and must consider himself a superman. Murder accepted for the sake of heroism, that is for an egoistic end, must produce an insane obsession with self, it must lead to self-annihilation and the wanton destruction of all true achievement.

The greatest misfortune is that, nevertheless, Napoleon with all his faults is taken as an example. This ideal of empty heroism is well suited to the whole epoch. The turning away from God which we find in the Renaissance and the emphasis upon the purely human had pushed everything in man which is near to God into the background, the revolution had shaken all the old ideals, and Romanticism had shown that it was unable to reconcile reality and the spirit—what else remained but to worship human action as such, what else remained but a pathetic greatness? The seductive example of Napoleon's career gives a disastrous power to this last belief. It is so impressive that even Heine and Nietzsche consider his memoirs as a great and admirable document. Men see only that he had the faculties of a genius, without noticing that these faculties must destroy each other; they see only his successes, without noticing that they are bound to lead to catastrophe.

Thus it is Napoleon who brings into being the greatest

of our dangers—that senseless industry, that aimless activity for its own sake, that overestimation of outward success without concern for its significance or for any deeper values, for its consequences to humanity or its durability. The triumph of self-sufficient heroism leads only to the demand that something should be achieved or some happening should take place which seems great, even though man is destroyed by it. Man is concerned only with his own self, while all the urgent social problems remain unsolved. Napoleon's imagination is entrapped in the realm of the practical, of immediate ends which he considers as alone real, and he does not see that in this sense there is no given reality at all, for practical ends have always to be created anew by the human mind. His purely material outlook thus leads to a Europe built on a purely material basis and threatened therefore with destruction because of its lack of spiritual values.

The ideal of self-sufficient heroism, however, so powerful today, is indefensible for other reasons as well, and this becomes clear when it is expounded philosophically by Nietzsche, the second of those great men who have led our times astray.

CHAPTER VI

NIETZSCHE: THE PHANTOM OF THE SUPERMAN

IT IS Napoleon's example which enables heroism to become the most important ideal and the reigning faith of the century. But he leaves it an ideal which is, nevertheless, confused and one which is not thought out to its conclusions. Even Napoleon is a hero with a bad conscience, and he needs the phrases whose insincerity he reveals only in secret. Even when he is talking, not about freedom and the republic, but about heroism itself, in which he really believes, a pale and uncertain praise of France and of the glory which outlasts centuries have to be mentioned first. The heroic deed, which they think all-important, is justified by its worshippers by appeals to God, or king, or country, and concepts which are almost mediaeval serve to hide the actual situation. Nietzsche alone tears off these trappings and thinks out the concept of heroism to its logical conclusions, achieving in the realm of thought what Napoleon had achieved in the realm of action. We feel we must compare him with a natural phenomenon, a raging thunderstorm, sweeping away the undergrowth of traditional concepts, of conventional and accepted beliefs, of comfortable morality. He shows that everything which seems to contradict mere heroism is rotten, and he destroys ruthlessly everything which stands in

his way. Thanks to him, man can at last proclaim his belief in the ideal which is really worshipped—that of heroism—without looking for excuses to cover it.

Nietzsche achieves this by the application of an unusually clear and deep psychological insight which can penetrate the realm of ideas, previously so carefully avoided. He never fails to lay bare those regions of the human mind which are "all too human." Man's noblest endeavours are suddenly disclosed as the masks covering his animal instincts. Where before men thought they were beholding enthusiasm and wealth of feeling, "sick feelings" and a "cruel voluptuousness" become visible, and the very virtues are recognized as the meeting place of crass egotism, indifference, dishonesty and lust for power. There is no enjoyment of things for their own sake, but only "the enjoyment of oneself through things." [1] We are illogical and unjust beings whose gratitude is "a milder form of revenge," [2] and whose pity, allied almost without exception with envy, is only the way by which the weak can win power, "the power to hurt." [3] Nearly all the motives which we publicly confess serve only to hide our real motives; "we shall seldom err when we ascribe extreme actions to vanity, mediocre actions to habit, and petty ones to fear." [4] All the subterfuges and evasions of the unconscious, which have been disclosed by modern psychology, were already discovered by Nietzsche. He knows the meaning of dreams and the longing for self-annihilation; he describes, though under different names, repressions, inferiority complexes and over-compensation.

[1] Menschliches Alluzumenschliches, I. Band, § 501.
[2] *Op. cit.*, I. Band, § 44.
[3] *Op. cit.*, I. Band, § 50.
[4] *Op. cit.*, I. Band, § 74.

That men before him had mostly believed the opposite does not disturb him, for belief is only "the adoption of guiding principles without reasons," [5] and "men believe in the truth of everything which is visibly, strongly believed." [6] The universality of a belief or a conviction also is in no way conclusive: "To help a doctrine to victory often means only so to mix it with stupidity that the weight of the latter carries off the victory of the former." [7] All actions are cruel, unjust, egotistic, only differing in their forms, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to dress up heroism in the cloak of virtue. Nor is it possible to make valid objections in these terms; different standards are needed.

At the same time, he succeeds in destroying the most powerful and obstructive hindrance to the cult of heroism—religion. In one respect this is a great achievement, for he is the first man who dares to put into unequivocal words what has been felt for a long time and what had to be said at last, and it is through him that thinking comes abreast with the age. He performed a valuable task in setting forth these conclusions which, whether right or wrong, express with accuracy the contemporary situation. We shall see that most of them are wrong, yet they disclose the state of mind which prevails in Europe, and by disclosing it they make it possible for us to base our judgments upon a recognition of the actual situation. Nietzsche's courage and honesty make possible a further development, by showing the existing basis of belief with which we have to deal.

Nietzsche establishes atheism, previously no more

[5] The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy, Vol. 7, Human, All too Human, p. 211.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 127.

than a hypothesis, as firmly in the realm of philosophy as it already is in the affairs of everyday life. He asks: "What thinker still needs the hypothesis of God?" [8] and he answers his question, proclaiming in a thousand different forms, again and again: "God is dead." He attacks all religions without reservation: "Never yet has a religion contained a truth, neither directly nor indirectly, neither as dogma nor as symbol." [9] He is not overawed by the apparently universally accepted Christianity: "If Christ's intention really was to redeem the world—has he not failed?" [10] With stimulating vigour he discloses those aspects of the Church where pagan idolatry still reigns, and he attacks her most pertinently for her struggle against sensuality, by which she imperils the ideal of heroism: "Christianity gave Eros poison to drink; it is true, he did not die from it, but degenerated into vice." [11] Christianity is to him "the greatest misfortune of mankind"; "I call Christianity the One great curse, the One great inner lie, the One great instinct of revenge for which no means are poisonous, underhand and petty enough." [12] Thus, however, the concentration of all attention upon man, for which the Renaissance had already striven, is carried to its conclusion, and man can develop freely as a natural, sensual being. As there is no longer any God and no future life to influence him, man alone is the measure, the centre and the aim. He can find his justification only within himself and in his own struggles; he can become of consequence only by his own achievements.

Nietzsche, therefore, can profess a purely human and

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 43.
[9] Menschliches Allzumenschliches, I. Band, § 110.
[10] *Op. cit.*, II. Band, 1. Abt., § 98.
[11] Jenseits von Gut und Böse, § 199.
[12] Der Antichrist, § 62.

self-sufficient heroism and bring about, from his standpoint, a complete "revaluation of all values." The hero need no longer look for an excuse, for he and his great deeds alone justify all aims and all actions.

All previous morality is seen as slave morals, herd-morals, destroying life and breaking down the healthy man so that he may be subjugated. "The European disguises himself in morality, because he has become a sick, sickly, crippled animal who has good reasons for being 'tame,' because he is almost an abortion, an imperfect, weak and clumsy thing." [13] Religion is a neurosis which produces and makes use of this illness. With Christianity, especially, begins "the slave-insurrection in morals" [14] which has justified and won over all those who are "misfits, the badly favoured, all the scum and the outcasts of mankind." Improvement in the Christian sense is the very opposite of real improvement, for it means "tamed, weakened, discouraged, softened, enfeebled, emasculated." Christianity "crushed and broke man entirely and submerged him as if in a slough of mud." [15] Only "beyond good and evil" does real life begin.

Pity for the weak is foolish. Slavery was always "a condition of every higher culture," [16] and "egotism is necessary if there are to be noble souls." The man who develops culture looks different from the picture which Christians and moralists have of him. "He handles lies, violence, the most ruthless egotism as his tools with such mastery that he could only be called an evil and daemonic being." [17] The "more complete men" were always the

[13] The Complete Works, Vol. 10, The Joyful Wisdom, p. 294.
[14] The Complete Works, Vol. 5, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 117.
[15] Menschliches Allzumenschliches, I. Band, § 114.
[16] The Complete Works, Vol. 5, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 189.
[17] Menschliches Allzumenschliches, I. Band, § 241.

"more complete beasts." [18] Forbearance and peace are enfeebling, and "in renouncing war one has renounced the great life," [19] for "war is the father of all good"; [20] it is "indispensable." [21] We must breed in man a new kind of conscience so that we associate what has hitherto been considered a virtue with a bad conscience, and strength and power with a good conscience. Man must strive to become "a beast of prey, the magnificent blond beast greedily roaming after booty and victory. . . . The animal must emerge again, and go back to the jungle. . . . It is the noble races which, wherever they went, have left in their tracks the concept of 'Barbarian'." [22]

With the help of this excessive justification, the ideal of the hero can now reach its culmination. The necessary external conditions have been created by Napoleon, of whose achievements Nietzsche says that they are "almost the history of the higher happiness . . . which has been achieved in this century in its most valuable men and moments." [23] Napoleon has completed what the Renaissance began: "He has brought again to the surface a whole part of the antique character, and what is perhaps the most important part," and thus he introduces a new era. "We owe it to Napoleon . . . that several centuries of war, unequalled in history, may now follow each other; in short, that we have entered the classical age of war . . . upon which all the following centuries will look back with envy and awe as on a manifestation of perfection." [24] Thus the image of the

[18] The Complete Works, Vol. 5, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 224.
[19] Götzendammerung, Moral als Widernatur, § 3.
[20] Fröhliche Wissenschaft, § 92.
[21] Menschliches Allzumenschliches, I. Band, § 477.
[22] Zur Genealogie der Moral, 1. Abh., § 11.
[23] Jenseits von Gut und Böse, § 199.
[24] Fröhliche Wissenchaft, § 362.

hero appears for the first time quite unalloyed, no longer weakened by obsolete supernatural concepts—for the first time it could command men's obedience in its own right.

The heroic will to power forces the spirit into its service and prevents it from encroaching on the realm of the sensual, and the intellect, more acute than ever before, forces the passions to reach their greatest development in the service of heroism. Thus, too, order is imposed on the chaos of the animal instincts. No longer suppressed, they are no longer driven into the darkest aberrations; they are able in the service of the heroic deed to develop freely and to contribute to the greatest enhancement of man's powers. The image of the superman rises before our eyes, the man who, superior to the animal by the weapon of his intellect and equal to the animal in his strength and beauty, becomes the master of the masses, the master of fate and himself, and so drives mankind forward to an aim whose overwhelming splendour we cannot yet grasp. All human limitations, all fear and pettiness, all dirt and insecurity become as nothing. The great man is coming into being whose glory can be dimly perceived in those few geniuses who hold us for ever in a spell of awe. The mission of the earth is fulfilled; in its greatest travail is born its greatest son who, at last, gives to existence its true meaning.

The ideal of heroism, which is embodied in Napoleon, is thus thought out to its logical conclusions and is presented to us on a higher plane. The cult of the individual has found its most consistent expression and now its rightness can be justly decided. All the reasons which today are brought forward in support of heroism, all the reasons, even, which it seems possible to bring forward,

are to be found in Nietzsche. If it is in any way possible to justify it and to prove its rightness, then it should be possible to do so from his works.

The progress of Nietzsche's thought is brilliant and seemingly convincing, yet when we follow step by step the establishment of his ideal, we soon discover that he is constantly entangling himself in contradictions, even if we exclude the inevitable divergencies between his early and later work. In all his teaching he has to take great pains to hide the contradictions upon which it is built.

This can already be seen in the theory of knowledge which he presupposes in all his works. Thanks to his masterly knowledge of psychology, he penetrates so deeply into the human mind that he achieves results similar to those of Kant. He sees that "rational thought is a process of interpreting according to a scheme which we cannot reject," [25] and he also recognizes that the validity of causal laws is open to doubt. But he wants to deny this resemblance to Kant and, as Kant has reintroduced religious concepts with the help of the thing per se, Nietzsche denies its existence and the existence of all absolute principles, even of the concept of truth itself. He concludes: "The world of appearances is the only world; the 'true world' is a lie added to it." [26] But this conclusion is nonsense, for if we interpret the world according to a pattern, then we cannot recognize it as it really is; the world as it appears to us hides the true world and the thing per se, and so we can know nothing about it, not even that it is a lie. The senselessness of such assertions becomes even clearer when Nietzsche defines truth as "that kind of error without which a certain

[25] The Complete Works, Vol. 15, The Will to Power, p. 38.
[26] Götzendämmerung, Die Vernunft in der Philosophie, § 2.

species of living beings could not exist." [27] For if this assertion is to have any meaning at all, it has to be a truth. He has an equally strong bias against the word "law," which seems to him to imply morals: "There is no law; every power acts at each moment in utter accordance with its nature." But this, if anything, is again the formulation of a law, the more so as he himself adds: "The fact that nothing else is possible is the basis of calculability." [28]

There is no way out—man, because he experiences himself as a fact, must base his ideas upon something which he can trust. We can, with Kant, restrict the scope of metaphysics by the establishment of clear laws, but if we try to deny the validity of all metaphysical statements, we are inevitably driven to expressing this in metaphysical terms. Nietzsche's struggle against truth, compared with Kant's fundamental searching, is in fact only a sham. He warns us: "Life is no argument; error might be among the conditions of life," [29] but this very life against which he warns us is for him an infallible measure. In spite of his theory of knowledge he does believe in a number of absolute truths, in a constant progressive development and in evolution, in heredity and in psychology. Eventually, he even thinks he knows the true nature of life and reality. "This world is the Will to Power—and nothing else. And even you yourselves are this will to power—and nothing besides." [30] Only thus can he announce the superman.

The inadequacy of his reasoning becomes even more evident in his struggle against Christianity. He tries to

[27] The Complete Works, Vol. 15, The Will to Power, p. 20.
[28] Der Wille zur Macht, § 634.
[29] The Complete Works, Vol. 10, The Joyful Wisdom, p. 164.
[30] The Complete Works, Vol. 15, The Will to Power, p. 432.

draw a sharp distinction between what belongs to Christianity and what to the Church, and he emphasizes again and again: "The church is precisely that against which Jesus preached—and against which he taught his disciples to preach." [31] Very frequently he comes astonishingly near to an understanding of Christ, and his strongest attacks are reserved for a distorted picture of the apostle Paul, whom he hates as the founder of the Church. But he does not want to understand Christ, for his own system of moral teaching is in extreme opposition to Christian morals, and yet he is altogether unable to attack Christianity from the right standpoint. The most important of the books in which he attacks Christianity—the *Antichrist*—does not attack any of the essentials of Christ's teaching. Sometimes it happens that, against his will, he uses arguments which come near to being against Jesus himself, but he always escapes, almost frightened, into the sphere of theological interpretation. Thus, however, his fight appears once more as a sham battle, for he professes to attack Christianity and, because of his grasp of its true meaning, he could have done so, but he shirks the issue and attacks only its surface—the external forms of the Church. He never discovers those points from which the most dangerous attacks upon Christianity could be made. He wants with this book to proclaim himself as the Antichrist, but he never really touches Christ and only confirms, against his will, His greatness and power. This is emphasized by his calling on a witness who most surely refutes him. He utters the wish that to confirm his conclusions the world of the gospels should be described by Dostoevsky, without understanding in the least how different is the work of Dostoevsky. In this, too, the proclamation of his ideal

[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

is based on error and on an inability to see the implications of his ideas.

The reason for his failure becomes clear when we consider Nietzsche's philosophy of morals, upon which he bases his attack. It rests upon contradictions similar to those which we find in his theory of knowledge. Though wanting to create a new morality, he nevertheless does not like the word "morals," and so denies that they are more than illusions and lies. From his assumption "Nothing is true," which he does not apply in his own work, he proceeds to the conclusion: "Everything is allowed," but this again is valid only so far as he is concerned with existing morality. For he is far from allowing complete licence in the world which he wants to create, but rather those actions which are the opposite of those which have been allowed before. He says: "Moral values are delusive values compared with physiological ones," [32] but that is not to say that there are no morals at all, but rather that physiology demands a different morality from the existing one.

It is here that Nietzsche is at his most superficial. He sees morals as nothing more than divine or supernatural commands, and in order that he may "kill God" he explains every moral law by reference to custom, prejudice and history. That may be correct so far as conventional morals are concerned, but his extension of this explanation to include all ideas of conscience and all sense of responsibility is unjustifiable. "Nobody is responsible for his actions, nobody for his nature." [33] Here is an important lapse in his otherwise great knowledge of psychology, for he overlooks the moral faculties which belong to the nature of man. Blinded by his discovery of

[32] Der Wille zur Macht, § 392.
[33] The Complete Works, Vol. 7, Human, All too Human, p. 43.

the will to power he overlooks the will to value. At the same time his own ideal, which makes a "revaluation of all values" necessary, is certainly founded upon the need for moral values, and his revaluation is obviously carried out with a very strong feeling of responsibility. In important moments of his life, Nietzsche speaks of his "terrible responsibility towards centuries to come," which makes it yet more clear that he is only concealing one of the most important and fundamental points of his teaching. Thus, however, all his attacks are bound once more to miss their mark, but they open the way to the unrestrained glorification of the strength and cruelty of the superman.

Similar fundamental contradictions occur when Nietzsche is not attacking, but attempting the more important task of establishing his new morality. In spite of his emphasis upon his theories, the dubiousness of his theoretical teaching would not in itself be decisive, for his aim is not to teach objective knowledge, but rather to proclaim new ends and aims so that mankind may be raised to a higher level of being. But even this teaching is based upon contradictions which cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Nietzsche owes one great debt in particular—the influence of Darwin over him is probably stronger than that of Schopenhauer or Wagner, or even that of the Greek philosophers. His most important ideas could never have come into being without the discoveries of Darwin. Above all he owes to him his limitless belief in heredity which enables him to base all his demands upon the assumption of a progressive evolution in history. He goes even farther than Darwin, for he is convinced that acquired habits can be inherited, and he believes that any other influence is powerless against

heredity. "If you know something about the parents, then you may draw conclusions about the child . . . and with the best instruction and education you can only succeed in deceiving others about such an inheritance." [34] Nor is the struggle for power, which he stresses in opposition to Darwin's struggle for existence, essentially different.

Nevertheless, in all his works there are nothing but attacks upon Darwin. He appears to Nietzsche as a meek Englishman of mediocre intelligence, whose "incomprehensibly one-sided doctrine" is submerged "in something very like the stuffy air of English overpopulation, something very like the smell of the want and the cramped life of the poor." [35] There is, it is true, one deviation from Darwin which is important in Nietzsche's work; he sees that, in the struggle for life, it is frequently the weak, the ill and the decadent who survive, contaminating and destroying the strong. But this deviation is of no great importance so far as the development of his theories is concerned, for the conception of Darwin which he denies, that of a constant development towards better and higher species, provides him with the model for his own ideal. It is because of this idea of evolution that he can demand man's development into superman, and the breeding of a new race. The teaching which he denounces as wrong leads him, nevertheless, to his own goal.

His practical demands, therefore, are as contradictory as his theories. He will breed a new human race of supermen, and because of the insuperable power of heredity he needs for this purpose the purest nobility of blood, which he defines thus: "Descent from good ancestors

[34] Jenseits von Gut und Böse, § 264.
[35] Fröhliche Wissenschaft, § 349.

constitutes the real nobility of birth; a single break in the chain, one bad ancestor, therefore, destroys the nobility of birth." Everybody who claims to be of noble descent has to be asked: "Have you no violent, avaricious, dissolute, wicked, cruel man among your ancestors?" [36] But this is as much as to say that such a nobility does not exist, for who could seriously answer such a question? Nor is it possible to see how this kind of breeding can be reconciled with the decadence, with "the inevitable mastery of the mediocre, even of those who are below mediocrity"? [37] Does this only apply if it is used as an argument against Darwin? Nietzsche also knows sometimes that "heredity is so very capricious," and even recognizes: "The short duration of beauty, of genius, of Caesar . . . such things are not hereditary." [38] Yet he demands incessantly the breeding of a new master-race and the prohibition, for its sake, of the reproduction of all "the discontented, the rancorous and the grudging," [39] the sterilization of criminals and "the annihilation of millions of misfits."

How literally such remarks are meant is shown by his reference to the Indian Chandala. He praises the religious rules which force this caste to be "the fruit of adultery, incest and crime," and which see to it that they are gradually annihilated by "deadly epidemics and the most ghastly venereal diseases," for this annihilation of the lower caste is "the necessary consequence of the concept of breeding." [40] Nietzsche's belief in the knowledge of the conditions of heredity and in the possibility of influencing it already borders here on delusion, for a

[36] The Complete Works, Vol. 7, Human, All too Human, p. 330.
[37] The Complete Works, Vol. 15, The Will to Power, p. 158.
[38] *Op. cit.*, p. 157.
[39] Menschliches Allzumenschliches, II. Band, Abt. 1, § 278.
[40] The Complete Works, Vol. 16, The Twilight of the Idols, p. 47.

strict adherence to these rules would have exterminated many families from which sprang those geniuses whom he admires. This breeding does not necessarily destroy the bad qualities of the human race, but certainly degrades those who enforce it on their fellow beings. He wishes to protect them and to turn them into supermen by eliminating the inferior types, but the effect would rather be to turn them into criminals and subhuman creatures themselves, and he does not say how they could, at the same time, become supermen.

Neither can we believe in the superman himself. Though the way by which he hopes to achieve it is wrong, yet that does not prove the wrongness of the aim; we could be convinced by its rightness and beauty and try to reach it in another way. Unfortunately, however, we are not able to consider the validity of the aim, for the superman is never shown clearly to us; he remains a sham, a phantom, a mere word. All that we can actually recognize is that man has to perish for the sake of the superman, and that man, even at his best, is only "a bridge to the superman." But the bridge leads into the void.

Nietzsche has nothing but what is superficial to say about the superman. The superman is noble, but the frequently recurring question "What is noble?" [41] is answered only with descriptions of strength and beauty, of dancing serenity and deepest seriousness, of insensitive cruelty and a great power of suffering. It is never made clear how these qualities could ever be combined in a single being, and they remain external qualities which do not necessarily apply only to the future superman, but also to very different people now in existence

[41] Cf. e.g. The Complete Works, Vol. 5, Beyond Good and Evil, chapter 9.

without identifying them by any essential quality. There is never a particular and characteristic inner quality which marks the superman. Man has to "serve the mission of the earth," [42] but this mission in its turn is to produce the superman. Man has to obey the body, for "soul is only the name for something in the body," [43] but the body asks only for strength and cruelty, without its being clear why it asks for them. The creator has to be hard, he is allowed to kill, and Nietzsche says that he must live "near to crime," but never does he say what it is that he has to create.

Nietzsche feels that heroism is invalidated by the inevitable tragic catastrophe and he tries, therefore, to create in the superman a hero who will not succumb. Though not driven towards a deed which must destroy him, the superman is continually to be enhanced by the qualities of a hero. But the essential senselessness of the ideal of heroism can only be concealed if it culminates in a tragic catastrophe. If this is prevented, nothing but emptiness remains. Nietzsche really proclaims nothing but "greatness," and he intends the adjective "great" to give a new meaning to all familiar concepts. He asks for the great style, for great disgust, for great contempt, for great politics and for great passion. The superman is "the entirely great man," and this prefix "super," too, means no more than "great." But such a purely quantitative change can lead us nowhere, for by it no new quality can be created; it is no more than a attempt to pretend the existence of something which is not there. Nietzsche himself knows at other times that "all poets and men of letters who are in love with the superlative want to do more than they can." [44]

[42] Also sprach Zarathustra, 1. Teil, Von den Hinterweltlern.
[43] The Complete Works, Vol. 4, Thus Spake Zarathustra, p. 35.
[44] The Complete Works, Vol. 8, Human, All too Human, p. 73.

Nietzsche's demands in the sphere of politics are a most conspicuous example of this confusion and emptiness. In one respect he is true to his ideological programme; he welcomes "compulsory military service with real wars in which all joking is laid aside," [45] and he approves of "all institutions and ideas which perpetuate the enmity and order of rank in States, such as national feeling, protective tariffs, etc." [46] At the same time, however, he becomes the sharpest and most bitter critic as soon as militarism or "this bovine nationalism" [47] make their appearance. He wars furiously and incessantly against the new German Reich which had just been founded, and he turns with violence against the young emperor William II, knowing suddenly in this case that power makes men stupid and that wars are devastating in the realm of the spirit too. He attacks "the absurd frontiers . . . which an accursed dynastic national policy has drawn up between peoples." He finds equally disgusting all those who translate into reality his theories about race and breeding, and he throws in the face of the admirers of his "blond beast" the "definition of the Teuton: obedience and long legs." [48] He pursues the anti-semites without mercy, in spite of the fact that they can justify themselves by many passages of his writings; he notes: "Not to have anything to do with anybody who takes part in this lying race-swindle."

Nietzsche is one of the most acute critics of his time and its culture; he has a most reliable taste which cannot be deceived, and so he wants to prevent his theories from being misused in the usual political struggle. Yet one asks in vain in what respects the ideal which he pro-

[45] The Complete Works, Vol. 14, The Will to Power, p. 104.
[46] The Complete Works, Vol. 15, The Will to Power, p. 190.
[47] *Op. cit.*, p. 203.
[48] Der Fall Wagner, § 11.

claims, if translated into reality, would have been different from the facts which he criticizes, the more so as the practical aim which he sets up is utterly opposed to all his theoretical teaching. He wants the "good European," but a good European would make impossible "the classical age of wars" which Nietzsche so much welcomes; to this end militarism and nationalism are certainly the better means. He is wrong when he refers to Napoleon as a good European, for he can consider him as such only because he overestimates those plans which fit in with this picture. Moreover, Napoleon wages wars because the good European does not exist, for as soon as he does exist there must be peace. The true "good European" would make wars superfluous; he would be the opposite of Napoleon and thus also of the superman. Nietzsche's political ideal is even more senseless and empty than his theoretical equipment.

To determine what is really meant by the concept of the superman, we can only turn, therefore, to the lyricism of *Thus Spake Zarathustra.* But this lyricism proves to be a means of escaping the necessity of answering any questions at all. Zarathustra is not the bearer of an idea, but only the excuse for ecstatic praise of a "great" idea which is presupposed and never exactly stated. His development is not a real and personal development, maturing by inner experience, but only a lyrical heightening. Zarathustra is praised as a friend, a god, an inspired fool, a dancer, but he never becomes a living figure. The symbols used in the book have no other quality than have the other embodiments of heroism; all those dragons and giants, dwarfs and monsters, do not solve the riddles of the world but summarize it into a figure which is more distinct but at the same time more uncanny and inexplicable than reality. While the parables

of Jesus, which Nietzsche despises, contain the solution of the problem with which they deal, such symbols as the dragon only make the terrors of nature more striking, without making them easier to understand and without in the least helping man to solve them.

The style of the book, even, which might give some guidance as to how we ought to approach the ideas, fails. Certainly it is in parts excellently and beautifully written, but it combines a religious style, which it has borrowed, with literary references and even puns; it plays with allegories and with words; it is at the same time emotional and artificial, lyrical and sophisticated. There are many magnificent passages, but much of their effect comes from elements which Nietzsche freely borrows from that New Testament which he disdains and abuses, from the expression "Verily I say unto you," or the last supper, or the sleeping of the disciples. At times he even comes very near to the style of Wagner which he so vigorously attacked. In the style too, therefore, we find only a laboriously hidden confusion.

At the point where we might reasonably expect a clarification of the ideas that have gone before, a new thought suddenly makes its appearance, pompously introduced and praised beyond all bearing, a new thought which makes impossible any serious discussion—the idea of eternal recurrence. It is altogether nonsensical to combine this particular idea with the prophecy of the superman, for if the same things and events and men must eternally repeat themselves, the superman must eternally remain impossible. But even if we are not bothered by this contradiction, even if we consider it as a confession that the superman is wrong and take it at its own value, even then the idea as such proves nonsensical and one by which it is impossible to live, and it

is a sign of the final destruction of one of the most fruitful tendencies in Nietzsche's whole work.

He always emphasizes that he embraces the ordinary things of life and the whole of experience. Even though he accepts illness, he nevertheless praises the sensual, earthly life, for none of his sufferings can shake his *amor fati*. His is a remarkable acceptance of life, whatever it may bring, able to stand against the general decadence. The more his teaching becomes entangled in contradictions, however, the less sure does the ground on which he stands become, and the more do lies and convulsive efforts to reconcile facts become necessary to preserve this love of fate. The tragic catastrophe to which heroism leads cannot simply be denied, and although the superman must not be defeated, the tragic elements reappear again and again. To deaden his inner doubts, therefore, Nietzsche must work himself up into an ecstasy. Only thus is it possible to embrace tragedy and to transform it, for in this state of ecstasy the feelings are so much in power that even catastrophe gives an intoxicated delight, and the intellect is so weakened that at the same time this catastrophe can be concealed and the destruction of man can be inextricably confused with his metamorphosis into the superman. But this inducing of ecstasy, which Nietzsche justifies by linking it with Dionysos, avenges itself upon him, because now the simple formula of *amor fati* is no longer sufficient, for as his love of life has to rise above the catastrophe, he needs a stronger and more ecstatic expression. He asks therefore for a love of life so great that it can endure, and even rejoice in, the eternal recurrence of the same, unchanged, accidental, imperfect individual life. But such an acceptance of life is quite impossible; no man can endure such an eternal recurrence of changelessness by

which any development, any modification, any correction of what has gone before are excluded. This grandiose expression of utter senselessness is indeed superhuman, for humanity can only be destroyed by it.

There is no way out, for heroism is no genuine ideal and as soon as we consider it closely we are bound to find contradictions, emptiness and despair. If it is robbed of the glory of the hero's death, nothing remains to make it worth striving for; if it is seen without illusions, nothing remains which we could desire for mankind. The reality which Nietzsche wishes to come into being is a horrifying vision. It is founded upon "the great war, military organization, nationalism, the competition of industry, science and pleasure"; its development is brought about by "the right to attack, the power of the appetites, slavery, revenge," and its crowning product is "the great criminal." If we do not consider Nietzsche as a critic, but take him, as he undoubtedly wants to be taken, as the creator of a world, there is nothing in his teaching but bestial brutality. He has, in fact, been repudiated already, for he was a prophet and the world which he conjures up before our eyes is the world of today; it is our present reality which the ideal of heroism, for which we have partly to thank Nietzsche, has brought into being. It hardly needs to be proved how little this reality has to do with any ideal, and how similar it is to the reality of the "Reich" against which Nietzsche struggled so contemptuously. This reality is not the result of the socialism which Nietzsche attacks as energetically and as inadequately as he attacks Christianity, for socialism remained without decisive influence for a long time after Nietzsche. But the great "classical wars" occur for which he longs, and show once more that war is not a renewal, but senseless destruction. Nietzsche says: "After the next

war I shall be understood"—we do indeed understand him today, and for this very reason we must refute him.

Nietzsche himself cannot withstand his own teaching, but is destroyed by it. This is particularly important as evidence against it, for Nietzsche is a really great personality and so far as philosophy determines his own life, he could be an example. He never occupies himself with unimportant concepts or with hair-splitting, for his inner need to solve his problems is so great that he always struggles with the one important question—how must we live? He is never satisfied with timid compromises and does not delude himself with the belief that it is possible to go back to the old ways of living; "we have destroyed the bridge—nay, more, the land—behind us . . . Nothing remains but to be courageous, whatever may result from it." [49]

Here is a teacher who takes his own teaching most seriously and without making any reservations. He endeavours to follow all his ideas to their final conclusions, and it is by them that he strives to live. He satisfies in his own life his demand that "we must constantly give birth to our thoughts from our pains and, like mothers, give them all that we have within us of blood, heart, fire, lust, passion, torments, conscience, destiny, doom." [50] Demanding "experimental thinking" which everybody has to follow out within himself, he sacrifices himself to his ideas. "You will never again pray, never again worship, never again find peace in an infinite trust—you will never again be able to be at rest before a last wisdom, a last goodness, a last power, and unharness your thought . . . there is for you no longer a divine avenger, one who sets

[49] Fröhliche Wissenchaft, § 124, and Menschliches Allzumenschliches, I. Band, § 248.

[50] Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Vorrede zur 2. Ausgabe, § 3.

things to rights as a last resort . . . there is no longer any resting place for your heart, where it has only to find and no more to seek" [51]—this is the rule which he establishes for himself and which he obeys. But it is because of this exemplary seriousness, however, that the contradictions in his teaching must become unbearable for him.

His life and teaching, moreover, are but another and a destructive contradiction. He proclaims that philosophy has to correspond with the body and the individual personality, but his thoughts are not in accordance with his own character. He tears his teaching from within himself by a painful effort: "I took sides against myself for everything which particularly hurt me and came hard to me." [52] He knows that his teaching ought to magnify him where he thinks himself too small: "Our defects are the eyes through which we see the ideal." He has no inclination for struggling or for violence and although his merit seems to lie in fighting evil, yet the Christian teaching of non-resistance is far more akin to him. Once he says himself that "one first has to do the excellent . . . but to avoid the bad and the mediocre . . . without struggling against them." [53] The war, which he later praises, is a terrible experience for him although he takes part in it only as a medical orderly. Its atmosphere spreads around him like "gloomy fog"; "for a time I heard nothing but a sound of wailing which never seemed to end." [54] When, in personal conflicts, his sister comforts him and asks that he "should be cheerful, for it is a fresh and merry war," he considers this advice as

[51] *Op. cit.*, § 285.
[52] Nietzsche contra Wagner, Wie ich von Wagner loskam, § 2.
[53] Menschliches Allzumenschliches, II. Band, Abt. I, § 183.
[54] Brief an Freiherrn von Gersdorff, 20. Oktober 1870.

the bitterest irony and confesses: "I am badly made for enmity."

The herald of the superman is not only weak, nervous, almost blind, and so ill that he is forced to give up his lecturing at the university, but he is also unusually kind, pure and warm-hearted. He struggles against pity as against his greatest danger, because he is really altogether open to it. At the same time, though declaring himself the irreconcilable enemy of morality, he is certainly moral in the petty bourgeois sense of the word. He praises sensual life, asking for the sovereignty of the senses, and saying that "the degree and the kind of sexuality of a man extend to the highest peaks of his spiritual life." [55] Particularly when speaking of philosophers he stresses that "to err in the fundamental problem of man and woman . . . is a typical sign of a shallow-mindedness, and a thinker who is proved shallow at this dangerous point . . . may generally be considered as suspicious, as exposed, as unmasked." [56] But he himself is unmasked by this statement.

His own belief in this justifies us in enquiring into his experience of love and his attitude towards women. The answer is clear. He is extremely shy of them, and he tries to overcome his shyness in the most conventional way, by proposals of marriage, which he always makes very awkwardly and in the first days of his acquaintance with them. He even accepts the match-making of his older women friends. His sexual experience is appallingly poor; he writes himself: "Perhaps I have there an evil gap within me." [57] Only once it seems could he have become freer, could he have loved sincerely and seriously, but

[55] Jenseits von Gut und Böse, § 75.
[56] *Op. cit.*, § 238.
[57] Brief an Rohde, 18. Juli 1876.

then he was too weak to defend himself against the interference of his family. In his work, however, this poverty is once more overcompensated; in the same way as, in spite of his sensitiveness and kindness, he worships force and violence, he pretends to know a lot about women and to despise them. What he has to say of these creatures who have to serve "only for the recreation of warriors" is stupid, shallow and false, and it remains quite obscure how such a "toy" could ever give birth to the superman. At bottom, Nietzsche always remained what he was as a boy—the show pupil—and with all his gigantic exertions he could not free himself from the hated small-town virtue which, after the town where his mother and sister lived, he called "Naumburg virtue." He submitted far more meekly to his family than Jesus whom he despised as a weakling.

But these very contradictions in his personal life are what saves Nietzsche from all those reproaches which have recently been made against him. The adherents of the modern creeds of violence can base themselves upon the most important parts of his teaching, for it is only in his personal experience, to which he does not pay sufficient attention, and in the more superficial regions of his taste that he rebels against the evil practical consequences of his own convictions. He continually contradicts himself, and thus it is possible to support very different conclusions by quotation from his writings. Nevertheless, there cannot be the slightest doubt that it is the belief in the superman, in wars, in violence, in the gospel of race and of the blond beast, which forms the core of his teaching, and his clarification of these doctrines has certainly helped in a high degree to establish the modern systems of government which claim him as their prophet. But Nietzsche only puts into words what had already

become the creed of his age; it is his honesty and courage which force him to make plain what most people try to hide or what, though it determines their actions, they do not allow to become entirely conscious. His teaching is utterly opposed to his character and he sacrifices himself to say what had eventually to be said, so as to clear the way for the future. All his prophecies have come true and his only mistake is that he accepts this future as great and desirable instead of recognizing its horrors. It is, however, only because he unreservedly embraces these ideas that he shows to what they lead in the end. His sacrifice is not conscious; he is driven ahead by his passion for following ideas to their conclusions, by his passion for utter sincerity, but we must respect his overcoming of his own nature. It is his teaching, his great personality and his truly tragic fate which enable us to recognize clearly how wrong the new systems are, and to understand that they are not merely superficial political events, to be conquered by political means, but a new faith and a new morality which can be defeated only by the true faith and the true morality.

The tragic consequences of this belief, by which we can see its wrongness, soon become obvious in Nietzsche's own life as he is gradually transformed into the very opposite of what he demands man shall become. One of his main accusations against the "religious neurosis" is that it leads to "three dangerous dietary prescriptions," to "solitude, fasting and sexual abstinence," [58] but this is eventually his own way of living. His solitude, in particular, is most disastrous for him. It is true that he praises this solitude as a necessary state for free minds, but his praise never sounds quite genuine and his complaints about it are far more convincing. He has never

[58] Jenseits von Gut und Böse, § 47.

found a real friend who understood him, so that even to one of those who think themselves very near to him he must finally write: "I have now forty-three years behind me, and I am still quite as lonely as I was as a child," [59] and his very moving last poem is still a touching cry for friendship. If he could have talked to someone, he could probably have found a way out of the contradictions of his teaching, but he is driven instead by his solitude to a constant exaggeration of his doctrines, and as he hears no reply, he has to cry louder and yet louder. The statement "God is dead" slowly becomes a cloudy and mystical utterance which has to comfort him in his loneliness. The torments of his solitary life are covered by a growing emphasis upon lightness and the frenzied dance, and finally howls of laughter penetrate the void to keep up the pretence of joy. Nietzsche asserts: "I count serenity among the proofs of my philosophy," but this is a proof against him, for his serenity is artificial. A romantic love of the unreasonable replaces spontaneity and fullness of life.

Yet to confess the failure of his teaching would be to declare that his terrible solitude is his own fault, and this he could not endure. It is easier to overlook all contradictions and to falsify one's own character. Once he wanted to accept everything; now he thinks that he is doing so without noticing that he draws a frighteningly correct portrait of himself in his description of the nightmare of the "nihilist" who is to come: "Not knowing, in the innermost core of his being, whither he is going. Emptiness. The attempt to overcome it with intoxication; the ecstasy of music, the ecstasy of cruelty in the tragic enjoyment of the downfall of the noblest men, the ecstasy of adoration of single men or ages. . . . The

[59] Brief an Rohde, 11. November 1887.

attempt to plunge into a frenzy of work . . . mysticism, the voluptuous enjoyment of the eternal void." [60] If he could have had but one friend to whom to reveal himself and confess his errors, he could have turned back and saved himself, but this is denied to him and so he must drown his inner emptiness at any cost.

He takes refuge eventually in an absurd overestimation of himself; he destroys everything by which he could judge himself, and so he is lost. He says of himself that he is "the seventh important moment in world-history." He believes that the whole of the history of mankind comes to a climax in the *Zarathustra*, and he wants to start a new calendar from the day of its writing. He believes that it is accessible only to the highest and most disciplined minds, and that the understanding of six sentences of it lifts man up to the heights of human destiny. "I have given mankind the deepest book it possesses." [61] The style of the book "flew a thousand miles above everything that has been called poetry before"; "the ecstasy of the first pages belong to world-history"; Goethe and Shakespeare would have been unable "to breathe for a moment in this passion and height." "Compound the spirit and goodness of all great souls into one: all of them together would not be able to produce one speech of Zarathustra." [62] He believes that he causes world-shaking convulsions, a crisis "the like of it has never been known on earth" [63]—"nothing of this kind has ever before been composed, felt, suffered: thus suffers a god." [64] He finally talks only "with flashes of lightning" and, his madness breaking out, signs his last

[60] Der Wille zur Macht, § 29.
[61] The Complete Works, Vol. 16, The Twilight of the Idols, p. 111.
[62] Ecce Homo, Zarathustra, § 6.
[63] The Complete Works, Vol. 17, Ecce Homo, p. 131.
[64] Ecce Homo, Zarathustra, § 8.

letters "Nietzsche-Caesar" and "Dionysos the Crucified" and, speaking as its sovereign, sends out his orders to the world.

The much-discussed question of how far his insanity is connected with his teaching and how far it is due to external causes hardly seems of great importance. It is certain that a predisposition to insanity, whatever may be its causes, will be weakened by healthy thoughts and strengthened by diseased ones. Nietzsche knows himself that man can transform his own destiny: "It is within your power to see that all you have experienced, trials, errors, faults, deceptions, passions, your love and your hope, shall be merged wholly in your aim." [65] The history of the illness is ambiguous, a proof how strongly mental factors contributed to it.

This illness would surprise us if he had lived in accordance with the natural tendency of his character and had allowed his goodness, his tenderness and his sensitiveness to develop freely, but his teaching clearly drives him into madness. His collapse is no sudden catastrophe; it gives warning of itself long before the actual outbreak, and Nietzsche seems almost intentionally to provoke it. Even a person of great health could not long have endured these thoughts and this life. It is not only impossible, but irrelevant, to try to discover how far the excesses of his teaching are due to his growing madness, or how far the madness is increased by his teaching, for his insanity is in any case a witness against his teaching. His ruin is the strongest refutation of his philosophy.

When the last barriers of consciousness are down, everything he had suppressed for so long comes to the fore. In overwhelming pity he embraces a tortured horse and calls it—a strange word in Nietzsche's mouth—

[65] The Complete Works, Vol. 7, Human, All too Human, p. 265.

"brother"; he still struggles against the Kaiser, but he accepts the Crucified, and thinks that he is surrounded by women. Neither of his friends Peter Gast nor Overbeck can escape the terrible impression that he has fled to madness for refuge, and that he is only pretending to be insane. It is hardly an accident that this madness, at the same time, gives his family victory over him. Now, at last, he has come home to the "Naumburg virtue," now his mother can write: "He obeys so well" and Overbeck exclaims in despair: "He no longer yearns for freedom—such is the end of this champion of liberty!"

Even after his collapse his fate remains characteristic of the destructive consequences of the ideal of heroism. Hardly ever before has the conscious falsifying and glorification, which always start after a hero's death, been so systematically performed as in the *Nietzsche Archiv*. But even here heroism cannot withstand an honest examination. We have to consider, therefore, those social and humane ideals against which Nietzsche struggles.

CHAPTER VII

FROM HEGEL TO HAECKEL: PROGRESS AT ANY PRICE

ARE the two trends which we have so far considered—the romantic flight from reality into pure spirituality, and the subordination of man in the name of heroism to a reality which excludes the spiritual—disastrous only if they remain single and isolated? Do they become fruitful if we consider them in a wider context, as opposite tendencies which influence each other and which, by their very opposition, make each other productive? Are they opposites which further the development of mankind by making possible new and more adequate orientations towards life than the former beliefs? The philosophy of Hegel, which is so influential in the first half of the 19th century, would appear to make such an interpretation possible, for he discovers in dialectics a law which seems to reconcile the opposites and to transform them into a principle from which a higher unity can spring.[1]

This dialectical method is based upon that important quality, existing in all thought, which we have already been forced to mention in considering the achievements of Goethe. We cannot think except in opposites; we cannot think of black without white, nor of good without evil, but we have come to take these opposites so much for granted that we hardly notice their existence any longer. Yet if we wish through the processes of

[1] See Bibliography, p. 298.

thought to attain to reality, we must become conscious of them, for all sense-impression, all natural laws and all concepts are created by us with the help of such opposites.

We can discern their existence in the manner in which we think of anything. An event, the fall of a stone, for instance, or a sudden sound, is one single event and it appears to us as a single unit, but it can take its part in the context of our other thoughts only if we consider it as the effect of a cause, as a reaction to a previous action. An object, too, is a single unit, but it becomes real only by its contrast with other objects and with empty space. If we wish to experience space, we have to realize its extension, which is only possible if we cross it in a certain span of time; time in its turn becomes real to us by acquiring a content connected with spatial reality. We can only recognize movement in an object when it changes its position in relation to other things. Because we turn with it, we should believe, if we were not taught otherwise, that the earth is at rest, for its movement can be recognized only by considering other stars whose own different motions contrast with it. A man is a single person, but we can establish him in our minds only by seeing him as one among many men, or as man as opposed to the animal, or as a living being confronted with inanimate things. Every pace is an overcoming of resistance, every breath is made up of inhalation and exhalation, of a movement of air through organs moving in opposition to it. Kant's categories and antinomies are single examples of a general law, and Hegel is right in rejecting this arbitrary selection and in stressing the general law, for here is the common basis of all our thinking.

In spite of all appearances to the contrary, these opposites are not a part of reality itself. It is always the

unity which we experience first; the division into opposites is part of the mental pattern by which we understand the unity. We see a stone fall, and it is only afterwards that we postulate the power of attraction which causes this fall; we hear a sound or experience pain, and the separation of the sense impression or the feeling from the awareness of it is artificial. Any activity has many aspects, but we have to find the appropriate opposites which will make us understand the aspect we wish to consider. Even such quite separate categories of beings as men, animals and inanimate objects, may be opposed to one another to enable us to grasp and describe certain qualities. The given reality is simple and undifferentiated, and the opposites are constructed by the mind.

Our dialectical way of thought is nevertheless important in reality also, for reality comes, to a great extent, from the actions of man and becomes, therefore, to that degree an expression of his way of thought. One extreme produces the other extreme; every strong action causes a reaction which leads to the development of its opposite. The opposed concepts of freedom and necessity, for instance, are deeply implanted as motives and forces in the human mind and clearly belong to the realm of thought, for we cannot think of one without the other, yet they are, at the same time, real driving forces in history. In politics, absolutism causes revolution, and revolution in its turn causes reaction, and each stage in this development is aided by the suppression and martyrdom inflicted by the ruling powers. In literature and art, there is a tendency to create, by the strict adherence to tradition, forms which are too rigid. This tendency, however, is always countered by an outburst of vitality which leads to the creation of works so different that by comparison with former achievements they appear almost

formless. This in its turn is usually followed by a classicism which again stresses measure and harmony, and which again leads towards the arbitrariness of Romanticism.

It is in the realm of history, however, that the real nature of the dialectical process becomes apparent, for here it tends to re-create the original unity which the opposites seemed to deny. This tendency can be recognized throughout history. Democracy exists as a compromise between revolution and reaction, classicism reconciles, on a higher plane, the previous formalism of literature and art with that fulness of life which followed, and it is possible, if only atheism becomes strong enough to create its opposite extreme, that the purified church which Hegel desires will unite the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches. The dialectical process, therefore, leads us from the felt unity of experience to that division into opposites by which we make it accessible to thought, but the opposites created in this way interfere with reality as qualities in our minds, and here the gulf between them makes us attempt to bring about a new unity by their reconciliation.

The discovery of this dialectical law enlarges the sphere of human life most fruitfully. It translates into abstract thought what Goethe had achieved in his life, for by it the negative elements in our life and thought lose their destructive and deadening effects. Even what is purely negative is transformed into a necessary opposite and as such fulfils a positive function, by helping to further human life and its development. The dialectical process consists, in fact, in a double negation, for the original unity is negated by the opposites, and only when these opposites are once more negated, can the new unity be created. The revolution fights against the conservative

powers, but only by a struggle against the revolution is a new democratic form of government created. Classicism arises when the previous formalism is destroyed, but it has to overcome the excess of vital energy by which the older tradition was destroyed. It becomes clear, therefore, that the negation fulfils not merely a negative and destructive rôle, but on the contrary a necessary and fruitful one. It is part of the real driving power of life, for it is because of this constant negation that results which have come into being lead to new achievements.

A complete void is not possible; to be able to negate, we ourselves at least must already be in existence. As it is unity which we first experience, acceptance is our original and natural reaction, and negation only follows and corrects it. We need not, therefore, choose between saying "Yes" or "No," but we can say them both; the opposites do not exclude one another; rather are they dialectical opposites which condition and complete one another. Human endeavour, therefore, can be best corrected and safeguarded if we clearly recognize this quality of negation. If we want to achieve something, we are driven to concentrate all our strength upon this one object and thus to become one-sided; this one-sidedness, however, is not an adequate response to life and sooner or later thwarts our endeavours. As other essential parts of our being are neglected, it leads to the opposite extreme. But if we make use of the dialectical negation, if we consciously evoke and contemplate and struggle with the opposite which is bound eventually to arise, then our endeavours can remain in harmony with the whole of our life, fulfilling it and satisfying its needs far more completely than could any one-sided exertion.

Dialectics makes a second and very essential contribution also to this clarifying and development of our con-

ception of existence, for it takes history within the realm of philosophy. The splitting up of a perceived unity into opposites and the overcoming of them is quite different each time and so it cannot be foretold. The dialectical method, therefore, cannot be restricted to the establishing of their abstract laws; the real historical process must also be considered. Before Hegel, the historian thought of himself as dealing with a special study and rarely attempted to survey human history as a whole. It is Hegel who forces us to connect this study with every aspect of our world; by including in it the arts, religion and thought itself, he transforms it into a comprehensive representation of the development of mankind, and thus he helps to bring about the habit of thinking historically, which is one of the characteristics of our age.

Such a knowledge of history is necessary if we are to understand man. All of us, in our short lives which are each confined to one small corner, can know only a tiny fragment of the nature and experience of man, and it is only by the aid of history that we can become conscious of the infinite possibilities of human beings. Only by its help can we acquire a greater measure of experience, give to our endeavours more varied impulses, and correct any one-sidedness by an unprejudiced examination of history. The materialist can study the extraordinary effects of Christianity which so quickly changed the world, and the idealist can study the crusades so that he may realize how little is achieved by ideas if man goes to war for them without the necessary material power. There is hardly a period of history in which we cannot enlarge our vicarious experience by studying the lives of men of greater personality and achievement. Former cultures can teach us to evaluate more correctly our own culture, to see how the beginnings of a new culture can

be developed, and to judge the different elements of which our lives are composed. The power of ideas which are declining can be renewed by considering them historically; the historical conception of the figure of Christ, which Hegel very much encouraged, stripped off the layers of dogma and ecclesiastical forms by which it was hidden. The historical knowledge of it showed the ever-present example in a new light. The general survey of history, by stressing the succession of great cultures, reduces the preoccupations of the present to their true stature and teaches us to see instead what is of real importance to man, for what is truly essential in the labyrinth of history can only be judged in perspective.

Unfortunately Hegel, at the very beginning, makes a mistake which prevents his dialectical method from proving fruitful. He is wrong in his arrogant disparagement of Kant, for only if dialectics were developed in accordance with the discoveries of Kant, could they lead further.

Kant's discoveries were indeed unsatisfactory at one point. He proves to our satisfaction that such opposites as cause and effect or intention and result are imposed upon phenomena by our minds, and that space, which we cannot perceive with our senses, is a formal principle in perception. But time necessarily seems to have a more real existence, for the passage of time in our lives is so real that to be told that it is only an inner sense does not satisfy us. The course of our lives from birth to death cannot be denied by any interpretation, and we also feel that the never-returning course of history is real in an absolute sense.

It is only by dialectics that this development, and history too, can be shown to depend upon the laws of our thinking. They enable us to understand that we cannot

completely recognize fate or the plan of God, for these further laws of our thinking, by including the whole sphere of history, prove it impossible even here to reach any absolute knowledge of the thing per se. But as dialectics is a law of thinking, it can only correct single experiences of man, destroy wrong metaphysical conclusions, and point to the moral nature of man as the sole realm of the absolute. Hegel, however, in spite of his discovery of the dialectical method, does not think in a dialectical way. He quite one-sidedly considers an entirely abstract concept of the spirit as alone real and true, and explains the material world, nature and life by an unjustifiably presupposed knowledge of this spirit. Thus dialectics do not erect boundaries against metaphysics, but, on the contrary, become themselves metaphysical. They are not considered as a law of thinking, but as truly a quality of this spirit, and so they can be used as supposed absolute knowledge to explain the creation of the world. The beginning which Hegel makes is that of a genius, but as he does not think in accordance with his own dialectical method, he arrives at disastrous and absurd conclusions.

This overestimation of the spirit, conceived of as purely abstract, seems so incomprehensible today that we are inclined to consider it as unimportant, and the investigation of it as superfluous. We are not surprised when this absolute spirit proves to be a false assumption, of no avail without the despised experience. But Hegel's influence was enormous; he ruled over the entire intellectual life of his time to a degree which we can hardly believe today. We may open German or English, French, Russian or Italian books of this period—if they deal with a subject which Hegel has treated, we shall almost certainly recognize his influence. Even the embittered strug-

gle against him, which very soon started, is mostly led by Hegelians, and neither Darwinism nor Marxism, to mention only the two most important of the systems which are in opposition to him, would be possible without his doctrines. Those fallacious theories which seem so uninteresting make possible all the aberrations which have prevented for a hundred years any further development of philosophy, and it is with his teaching, now long obsolete, that those disastrous developments in thought begin which are still most important today.

We have forgotten upon how slight a basis are built some of our beliefs which we now hardly question. It can only help us, therefore, to consider this basis, for the fact that it is obsolete makes it easier for us to recognize what are the mistakes in those modern creeds which take their rise from Hegel. His proofs that the abstract spirit is alone real, for instance, are not important, but they show how inadequate are the philosophical foundations of some of the doctrines which most of us, even if we deny their consequences, nevertheless accept uncritically.

When Hegel goes to bed in the evening, he notes down: "Now it is night." Waking up in the morning, he finds this observation, but now it is no longer correct, for "now it is day." But now is still now, and thus he comes to his concept "the Now." He goes into the street and observes: "Here is a tree," but when he turns round he must correct himself and say: "Here is a house." Here, however, is in both cases here, and so he finds his second concept, "the Here." [2] He thus comes to a great number of concepts, "the This," "the Other," "the Something"; "Something becomes another thing, but the other thing is itself something, therefore it also becomes

[2] Cf. Phänomenologie des Geistes, (A) Bewusstsein, 1. Die sinnliche Gewissheit.

another thing." [3] He turns all the concepts about in his mind so much that they become entirely meaningless, so that they can be applied to everything, and thus it is very easy to prove whatever he desires. In this way experience, actual events and concrete objects become of secondary significance and the purely abstract and empty spirit alone remains true.

It is by this complete exclusion of reality, however, that Hegel comes to that idea which the world of his time found greatest and most inspiring, for now, freed from all restraints, he can construct a metaphysical system which is very simple. The world is created, because there must be an opposite to the absolute spirit or God, and the world, too, must be split up into its dialectical opposites, and thus the whole abundance of reality comes into being. Nature, the first stage of dialectical negation, merely displays these opposites, and the dialectical method of the human mind makes use of them to create new unities. These unities, in their turn, have to be dissolved into new opposites which, on a higher level, are again resolved into further unities—and thus human thought leads the world back to the unity of God. The dialectical method, robbed of the true application of opposites, is made to work in one direction only and becomes a steady progress from lower to higher forms, from the worse to the better. Thus is born the modern form of that belief in progress which penetrates like a poison into all the thought of the century.

Dialectics, rightly understood, could be a strong counterpoise to the belief in progress, for it shows that the different opposites belong to the same way of thought and must, therefore, be considered equally thoroughly.

[3] Cf. op. cit. II. Die Wahrnehmung und Wissenschaft der Logik, I. Teil, 2. Kapitel, B(a).

Every new dissociation leads us back to the same starting point and we are confronted, again and again, with the same task, for all that matters is to find that unity which is true to life and which can therefore endure. But the interpretation of dialectics as steady onward progress is much easier and far more attractive than this constant struggle to do justice to life, and thus the fact that it is really deeply rooted in the human mind only helps to support wrong and superficial belief.

Hegel's philosophy of history, which makes impossible the fruitful application of dialectics in this sphere, shows very clearly how many distortions are necessary to prove progress. It is very important that history should be included in the sphere of philosophy in order that we may judge our philosophical conclusions more correctly, but Hegel attempts to transform this study itself into a philosophy, and this is inevitably disastrous. For then the recognition of single facts and the unprejudiced investigation of the material, which could help us, are replaced by a single theory which explains everything and spoils it by metaphysical revelations. We have already had occasion to mention how doubtful are the consequences of this philosophy. The past is ambiguous, for we cannot with any certainty reconstruct the attitude of man in past ages, and we can interpret every event according to different, and even contradictory, theories. We can grasp, to a certain degree, the single event, the single human being and the main trend of a culture, and we can collect and investigate whatever material has been preserved, but every comprehensive interpretation remains unreliable. The life of Napoleon, for instance, is known historically and can be understood in human terms, and the better we know the material, the better shall we understand it. But if we consider him as the end of one

era or the beginning of a new one, if we see him as the executor of a mysterious law of world-history, then our interpretation remains arbitrary and uncertain. As the past is so ambiguous, such theories could be satisfactorily proved only by the fulfilment of prophecies and, as single events disclose very little and can occur accidentally or for reasons other than those expected, we could consider as valid proof only the accurate prophecy of events over a long period. Only after a long time has passed, therefore, could we say whether or not such a philosophy is correct, and so it can have no validity at the time of its creation.

The philosophical treatment of history is particularly difficult for another reason too. The course of events seems to be determined, time and again, by mere accidents. We can hardly avoid asking what would have happened, for example, if Napoleon had died in 1804, or if the democratic and anglophile father of Kaiser William II had lived longer. It is true that many theorists claim that single personalities are only the agents of deeper impersonal powers and that, therefore, they are of no importance in themselves, but in view of the undeniable influence of many individuals on the course of history this too cannot be proved. In the natural sciences, we can discover by experiment what happens if conditions are changed. In history, however, no such experiments are possible, and interpretation remains arbitrary. If we look more closely at the interpretations, we shall always discover that they are mainly used to build the desired interpretation of the contemporary situation on a foundation of history, to make this interpretation more convincing by giving to it the appearance of historical necessity. Herein lies the great danger of such a philosophy, for it seems to create a law where in fact only the

intention of the philosopher prevails. The desire to bring about a certain situation, which would probably remain ineffective, is strengthened and made to appear inevitable by a seemingly scientific method. Every interpretation of history becomes, consciously or unconsciously, the weapon of a non-scientific tendency.

But this transformation of history is necessary if it has to prove the existence of progress. It is only by forcibly excluding inconvenient facts and by subordinating science to an empty philosophical system that Hegel can see world-history as an uninterrupted development leading to the realization of the spirit, for only thus can he see all events as stages in a constant dialectical process leading towards perfection. That this is not in fact what happens does not bother him, for it is very easy to represent earlier events as worse than those which followed, and it is the theory which alone matters to him. He judges the cultures of Asia with a superficiality which has probably to be explained by the fear of confronting these deeper ideas. This judgment can perhaps be excused in part by the inadequacy of the knowledge available to him, yet what excuse can be found when he contemptuously reproaches the Chinese for having discovered gunpowder, but for having waited for Europeans to invent guns for them, or when he claims that their civilization is inferior because they did not wage wars? He considers the Roman culture, naturally, as altogether superior to the Greek, for it is the later culture, and it paves the way for the creation of the modern state. Most surprising is his treatment of the Teutonic races. When Negroes commit bestial and senseless murders, it is a sign that they do not truly belong in the realm of history, but if the Teutons do the same, he shows that they will have to accept and to spread Christianity, for from primi-

tive times they "have the power of being the bearers of the higher principles of the spirit."

The most absurd statements, however, and those which make it difficult to believe in Hegel's honesty, occur when he has to represent his contemporary situation, because it is the latest stage of development, as the best so far attained. The description of the uncontrolled bestiality of Negroes, which would be in place in any "penny dreadful," is only used to justify the slavery which still existed by representing slavery in contrast with such animalism as a means of moral education. But how, in a Europe governed by the Holy Alliance, can it be maintained that world-history is "the progress in the consciousness of freedom"? Yet this also is not difficult for Hegel. To make it credible, he defines three stages of freedom: first, the freedom of the single individual, which is despotism; second, the freedom of a few which is achieved by aristocracy and democracy; and third, the freedom of everybody which is achieved in a monarchy. Thus it is possible to see the Prussian state after the wars of liberation against Napoleon, at the time of worst reaction, as a perfect ideal. It is not only the best state of its time, but also the best in world-history; in France, where Hegel clearly sees everything bad, the revolution was necessary, but in Prussia because of these ideal conditions it is not. Prussia creates the best state, and Hegel the best philosophy; it is difficult to imagine how, after this, history could go on at all.

Any significance which the dialectical method might have in human affairs is thus destroyed. Hegel's denial of the possibility of absolute negation is most important, but as he himself wants to accept the whole of history as reasonable and to see it as progress, he goes too far. He no longer even pays attention to that secondary negation

which originally he considered as the driving force of the dialectical movement; he accepts everything. "Everything which is real springs from reason; everything which springs from reason is real." As a result, however, all ethical values have to be abandoned for the philosophical interpretation of history, for even the most immoral impulses and the greatest crimes are part of the onward progress of history and therefore serve progress. "God rules the world, and the substance of his government, the fulfilment of his plan, is world-history." If, therefore, history is considered as accessible by a scientifically exact philosophical interpretation, there is no room for human judgment or valuation. The task of philosophy is merely to justify whatever happens or whatever exists.

For different reasons, Hegel comes to the same conclusions as Nietzsche did later. Great men have to be immoral and criminal, for their egotism becomes by "the device of Reason" the executor of the world-law. Wars, of course, are good and right, for they have occurred, and therefore they are not to be judged, but accepted. War preserves "the health of nations . . . as the movements of the winds save the sea from the corruption into which it would fall by a lasting calm, just as nations would by a lasting or, even more, by a perpetual peace." Therefore the duty of governments is "to shake them from time to time by wars." He even praises the rifle, for not only is it progress by comparison with more primitive weapons, but also it brings about "the invention of the general, indifferent, impersonal death," and by this mystical quality is obviously a means to health. In such a picture there is no room left for human values, and morality is replaced by external and historical laws.

Thanks to his ability to take away all meaning from the concepts he uses, Hegel can easily prove that "the

state is the divine idea as it exists on earth." The single individual is an evil being who becomes good only through the state, for "one has to know that it is by the state alone that man acquires any value which he has as a spiritual reality." Therefore he can claim no rights against his government, which alone decides what is good and what evil; "which action is good or not, right or wrong, is decided, for the ordinary experiences of private life, by the laws and customs of a state." All reaction is thus justified. Hegel himself wants a tightening up of the censorship, and he accompanies every progress of democracy in France and England with scathing criticism.

We can discern, therefore, the most disastrous effects of belief in progress, whether idealist or materialist, even in its obsolete form. If the external plan of world-history and its laws can be recognized, the inner law of man is of no use, for it is possible to find out by considering the external events what he has to do and what not, and knowledge of a general historical law can dictate the rules by which he must act. For the sake of a doubtful metaphysics and a philosophy of history which is certainly wrong, the only certainty which man possesses is betrayed; for the sake of a world-law which is assumed to be known, but which cannot in fact be known, the voice of his conscience is deadened. Hegel consistently attacks all ethical rules, for since he believes that everything which happens is identical with reason, he can also assert that no idea could be confined to a mere command. "The idea is not so impotent as merely to command what should be done and not to be itself real." "What ought to be exists in fact also, and what only ought to be without existing is not true." The concept of guilt is abolished; Hegel talks of being guilty of evil

and guilty of good, and by a play on words "guilt" is made to mean "cause." Feeling is excluded, for "such an empty thing as good for the sake of good has no place whatsoever in living reality."

As everything progresses automatically, it would be nonsensical to repudiate the external law for the sake of an inner law, and the best way of making sure that the world will become good and magnificent is to allow everything to go on as it is. It is superfluous even to examine external events; we can act as pleasure, practical ends or comfort demand, or we need not be active at all, for it is certain that everything in the end will of itself become good. Every conclusion which can be built on a seemingly convincing external evidence is given the right to destroy man, but everything which could help us to be true to our deeper impulses is excluded. The endeavours of mankind are paralyzed and deadened from within.

The great power of the belief in progress, however, comes from the acceptance of Hegel's ideas where he himself neither expects nor wishes it—by the adherents of the materialist conception of the world against which he struggles. The natural sciences led men in the 19th century to a new and quite different conception of the world, and it is as if the adherents of this conception were only waiting for a system of thought which would enable them to give to their conviction a consistent philosophical expression which would transform it into a new belief. And what system could be more welcome to them than that of Hegel?

To understand the tremendous power which the belief in progress acquires by its connection with the natural sciences, we must pause for a moment and realize how immense were the discoveries which overwhelmed men's minds during the 19th century. They seem so self-evident

today that we easily forget that many of them are not even a hundred years old, but a few hints are sufficient to show the fundamental change which has taken place.

It is only in the course of this century that the biblical story of the creation, which until then had possessed the validity of a scientific theory, has been definitely discredited and that, for the first time, all natural processes have been explained by scientific laws. The theories of Kant and Laplace show how the stars came into being; Lyell's geology is confirmed by so many discoveries that the history of the earth can be considered as known; Bunsen's analysis of the spectrum proves that all the stars consist of the same elements and that, therefore, the universe must be considered a unity.

Mechanical physics attains to the same perfection. Robert Mayer completes Lavoisier's law of the conservation of mass by the law of the conservation of energy; Dalton sets forth the modern theory of atoms; Hertz discovers electrical waves, and mathematics begins to penetrate the whole realm of inorganic matter. At the same time, Mendeléeff systematizes the science of chemistry by basing the classification of elements on the Periodic Law, thus leading to the discovery of new elements which, in their turn, explain processes previously inexplicable.

Most important, however, is the investigation of living beings. The discovery of the cell makes it possible at last to understand the nature of organisms, and when it is proved that they, too, contain only those chemical elements which exist in all nature, and also that man grows from an egg-cell, the belief in a mystical life-force is completely destroyed. The investigation of the brain and the nervous system shows that physical processes are connected with psychological ones so that, for the first time,

the close connection between mind and matter is proved. Finally, this imposing structure is crowned by the discoveries of Darwin, and the theory of evolution transforms the meaningless co-existence of things in nature into an intelligible relationship. It is not hard to understand that this development of the natural sciences should drive man to try, with their help, to explain the whole of existence.

This tendency could have been checked only by Kant's theory of knowledge, for this theory, without hindering the natural sciences or intruding into their sphere, within which one can and must trust them, nevertheless limits their importance. The sciences, Kant says, can be applied only to the realm of experience, for our knowledge of the thing per se, of God and of the fact of immortality is of a different kind from scientific knowledge. There are still enigmas which are not solved and which obviously cannot be solved at all. It is not possible to explain how the world came into being and why motion first occurred, nor how life developed from inanimate matter and how it was endowed with consciousness. These enigmas, clearly set out by a philosophical system, could still have excluded false metaphysical conclusions. But the enormous influence of Hegel destroys all the achievements of critical philosophy. Instead, Hegel breaks into the realm of experience and provides a metaphysical explanation of the world, thus justifying the natural scientists when they, too, try to explain the world as a whole.

Against his will, Hegel makes possible all the errors of a materialist explanation of the world, for by his one-sided interpretation of reality, to which he holds despite his own method of dialectics, he opens the way for other one-sided explanations. If the world can be derived from

spirit alone, there is no obstacle to a similar derivation which relies upon matter alone. His abstract method, which is well-nigh meaningless, even makes it easy to prove that materialism is much more reasonable and true, for compared with his natural philosophy even the most primitive explanations of the natural sciences seem convincing. It cannot be denied that it is very healthy to read a materialist book after reading Hegel. It is thanks to him, moreover, that one has once more to include God and immortality in such an explanation, and naturally these concepts do not withstand scientific investigation, for they are not accessible by this method. Their inclusion, therefore, makes it very easy for the natural sciences to deny entirely the sphere of the spirit.

At the same time, Hegel shows the method by which such a one-sided explanation of the world can be established. He explains the whole world by one unknown fact, the spirit, and by one unknown process, the assumption that the spirit projects itself as reality. If conscious philosophy applies such a method, how could the more naïve natural scientists hesitate to explain reality by an unknown substance and an unknown energy? It is true that Hegel once asks the vital question: "If God is self-sufficient and without need, how does he come to his decision to create something entirely different from himself?" But he does not really understand his own question, for he answers: "The divine idea is this very decision to put this 'Other' out of itself and to take it back again into itself." This, however, is exactly the method of materialism; energy is regarded as a quality of matter, and thus it seems possible to explain everything.

All the theories upon which materialist philosophers base their systems are thus given to them by Hegel. In spite of Kant, a Feuerbach can claim that sense-experi-

ence is "clear as the sun," that it cannot be doubted that "where sense-experience begins, all doubt and conflict cease." Sense-experience, however, can be derived from physiological processes, and the human mind, therefore, is soon reduced to a mere movement of material particles. Moleschott asserts: "Thought is a movement of matter," and Vogt even claims that thinking is connected with the brain just as the bile is with the liver or the urine with the kidneys. Eventually Haeckel, who is the most successful popularizer of the natural sciences in Germany and also most characteristic of the whole of Europe at this time, overcomes all difficulties by attributing three qualities to the atom—first, the filling of space or substance, second, motion or energy, and third, sensitivity or spirit. He does not even seem to notice that he has merely shifted the problem from one sphere to another. Every enigma seems to him to be solved: "The whole wonderful wealth of forms on our earth is, in the last instance, the transformed light of the sun. . . . Mechanical and chemical energy, sound and heat, light and electricity . . . are only different forms of one and the same original power, of Energy," and this Energy, of course, includes man and all his faculties—a worthy counterpart to the spirit which develops dialectically into the world!

Everybody seems to have forgotten that our sense-experience is conditioned by our senses, and that the number of light-waves which form the colours tells us nothing of our experience of colours. Nobody seems to notice that even the most comprehensive knowledge of the movement of the atoms in our brain would not explain the simplest thought, because motion and consciousness cannot even be compared. Nobody seems to notice that we do not know what "matter," "atom" or

"energy" which are supposed to explain everything really are, that they are only concepts, mere names hiding the incomprehensible. But Haeckel puts into words what is believed by the majority when he asserts that Kant's theory of knowledge is "a great mistake," which can only be excused by the fact that at his time "that physiological and philogenetical basis was lacking, which has only been established sixty years after his death by Darwin's transformation of the theory of evolution and by the discoveries concerning the physiology of the brain." The world is deprived of any meaning; "the recognition of truth, the aim of all science, is a natural physiological process."

These conclusions, too, seem obsolete today, and this is why we see more clearly how senseless they are. But materialism is still built upon similar foundations, and it is because of these conclusions that the belief in progress, which is today still far too powerful, could be connected with materialism. The enormous influence of Darwin was only possible because this basis of materialism had been established, for thus he seemed to prove the truth of the progress in which everybody wanted to believe.

Hegel himself opposes the theory of evolution and, in accordance with his overestimation of the spirit, thinks that progress is possible only in the realm of spirit. "The changes in nature, in spite of their being infinitely varied, show only a cycle which eternally repeats itself." But belief in progress is so conspicuous in his philosophy of history that his reservations are insufficient, nor does his poor attempt to fit the world of the senses into his dialectical scheme provide an adequate counter. The immediate and general acceptance of Darwin's theories can only be explained if we understand

the influence of Hegel on his time. The theory of evolution was almost completed before Darwin, without great attention being paid to it, and even Darwin himself and his followers are not able to make it entirely consistent, for the main problem of this theory has remained unsolved until the present day. Hegel was largely responsible for that attitude of mind in which it was possible to overlook the deficiencies of the theory and so to accept it.

The theory of evolution is nothing but the transference of the one-sided dialectical method to the realm of biology. In both the method and the realm to which it is now applied it is claimed that there is a progress from the simplest and most primitive forms to the most perfect and most recent ones. The theory of evolution postulates an uninterrupted chain of progress in which life develops from the simplest cells, through higher and higher species, to man.

This theory has proved of such great value to scientific thought that we cannot discard it, but we must not forget what has generally been forgotten, that it is only a useful working hypothesis and not a proven dogma, for how this development takes place is still entirely unknown. The actual problem which already formed the subject of Darwin's main work *The Origin of Species*, the problem of how one species can ever develop into another, is still unsolved. It has been proved neither that acquired characteristics can be inherited, nor that individual deviations and abilities nor customs nor the influence of external conditions can altogether transform the species, nor that sudden mutations lead to the development of new ones. We know of small transformations within the same species and we can even bring such changes about, but it has not been possible to create new species, nor to observe how they arise, nor to dis-

cover the intermediate forms between them. Not only the theory that the single cell develops into man, but also that other highly developed mammals do so, and even that the cell becomes a more complex organism, remains no more than a hypothesis. In spite of many decades of investigation, in spite of many geological and other discoveries, we can still rightly say, with Darwin, that our ignorance of the laws of change is profound, and contemporary scientists are far less inclined than were those of the last century to make definite assertions about heredity.

The theory of evolution, moreover, has the same flaw as Hegel's philosophy of history. In contradiction to its underlying principle it has arrived at a conclusion and so it does not lead beyond man. All further developments can be no more than unjustified prophecies; Nietzsche's superman was bound to remain a vague speculation. Not only man, but all highly developed species, are final results which are obviously unable to develop further, for the more highly a species is developed, the more rarely is cross breeding successful, and the more quickly do the offspring of those crossings which were successful become sterile. But it is just these highly developed species which ought to develop further, if there is to be real and steady progress. Thus we see that the most deeply rooted dogma of our age is found, on examination, to be full of omissions and far from proven.

Darwin's main achievement is his establishment of the theories of natural selection and of the struggle for existence. The belief that all organisms were part of a coherent plan was one of the last proofs for the existence of God, for it could not be imagined that this was possible without a creator and without a planned organization of nature. Darwin, without consciously intending to do

so, destroys even this last bulwark of the kind of theological metaphysics represented by this proof. He shows that all living beings reproduce themselves far more quickly than does their food supply and that, as a result, their living space becomes too small. The consequence is a cruel life-and-death struggle for food and living space, in which the weak individuals are wiped out and only the fittest survive. This fitness, however, results from accidental and individual deviations which prove useful; the normal individuals of the species succumb and their line becomes extinct, while the deviations survive because of their better equipment for the struggle for life. The peculiarities which make for survival are inherited and lead to a constant improvement of the species and the development of new ones. Natural selection, therefore, explains by a purely mechanical process the development of even the most complex and wonderful organisms, so that all kinds of metaphysics seem to be excluded in favour of an exact mechanical law.

In fact, however, one kind of metaphysics has been replaced by another. Since progress and evolution are only hypotheses, and since the possibility of inheritance has not been proved, it is far from certain, too, that they are the fittest individuals who survive. We continually see that the very best, the strongest and most beautiful races have the least power of resistance; it is not the eagles but the sparrows who survive. Who can prove that greater efficiency is identical with higher development and with greater perfection? It may well be that, on the contrary, the less differentiated, the less sensitive species can more easily adapt themselves to difficult or changing conditions. The struggle for existence, the conditions of which are still quite insufficiently known, may serve, not progress, but a process of levelling down. The ideas ex-

pressed by the words "higher" and "perfect," moreover, are purely human concepts which are hardly justified when applied to animals. Evolution can perhaps be made convincing with the help of a theology which supplies the motive power which is lacking, but its mechanical basis, by which it is supposed to replace theology, is neither certain nor convincing.

The results of these metaphysics are nevertheless disastrous. They are very similar to those of Hegel's philosophy of history, for, like his theories, belief in the struggle for existence excludes any morality—giving instead the strongest support to the ideal of heroism, to every kind of ruthless competition and to a completely immoral attitude to human actions. If progress, even in nature, is achieved by a life-and-death struggle and if, even there, the exercise of cruelty is the condition on which life goes on, man too would seem to have the right to use force, to commit crimes and to wage war, for in such a view of the world it seems unnatural to expect man to be exempt from natural laws. We are even forbidden to reject cruelty and violence and war, for it is this very struggle which vouches for progress, and it is in this way that we have performed so much. The achievements of all the earlier centuries, says Haeckel and with him many other disciples of this philosophy, cannot even be compared with those of the 19th century.

Yet all these conclusions which concern morality are certainly fallacious. Even if we could be absolutely certain that such a struggle for life takes place in nature, this would be no proof that its laws apply to man as well. Man, by reason of his consciousness, is entirely different from the whole realm of plants and animals. Why then should he be governed by the same laws as nature, for does not his consciousness indicate that he has to obey

different laws? It might, of course, be argued that nature has created consciousness in order to find a way out of the cruel struggle for existence and to create possibilities of peaceful development. This, too, cannot be proved, but it is at least as convincing as the gospel of cruelty.

It is certain, however, that the materialist belief in progress must inevitably be even more dangerous to any human endeavour than the philosophy of Hegel. He destroyed man's inner freedom, but at the same time he emphasized the existence of the spirit, and thus his teaching had revolutionary as well as reactionary effects. The materialist belief in progress, by subordinating the spirit to external reality and explaining morality as mere customs and inherited habits due to external conditions, endangers all human endeavour. Once more the one thing which is certain and fruitful in man is betrayed for the sake of a doubtful theory, and this time it is done more thoroughly than it was by Hegel, for he still respected the mind. Man is destroyed for the sake of assertions which cannot be proved and which are not even probable.

Any belief in automatic progress, whether based upon an idealistic philosophy of history or upon natural science, must make human endeavour superfluous. We can only avoid this frustration by excluding a presupposed absolute knowledge of the laws governing historical events, whether reached by abstract speculation or by the transformation of scientific theories into dogmas, for we cannot recognize the absolute through our intellect. We can advance only if we trust those principles which we discern within ourselves, for only morality can be justly conceived as absolute and provide a genuine stimulus to better actions.

But there is one element, in Hegel's philosophy as

well as in the teaching of the materialists, which seems to lead towards this further advance. They do not start from the individual, but from human society, and pay attention, to a far greater degree than the other doctrines of the 19th century, to the external forms of human life, to politics and to social and economic conditions. Even Hegel, despite his abstract way of thinking, talks of the different forms of government, of industry and of social classes, and Darwin's theory of the struggle for life is based upon the sociological writings of Malthus. The barriers of individualism are destroyed, and it seems possible that this achievement might still help to liberate man from all supernatural chains. It is not necessary in this context, however, to consider these incomplete teachings themselves, for here another disciple of Hegel offers a far more developed basis for discussion.

CHAPTER VIII

MARXISM

THE philosophical systems of the 19th century which we have considered were at bottom philosophies of death. Romanticism and heroism lead men to destruction for the sake of goals which cannot be reached, and Hegel and the followers of the natural scientists, who want to escape this destruction, accept external reality so completely that, by subordinating man to it, they too destroy him. The fundamental problem of the Renaissance, whose solution appears more and more clearly as the most important task of the 19th century—the problem of how to focus all attention upon man without either falsifying his true nature or stunting his growth—still remains unsolved.

This very problem, however, is most clearly recognized by Marx and Engels.[1] Engels states quite unequivocally: "Man has only to know himself, to measure all conditions of life against himself, to judge them by his own character, to organize the world according to the demands of his own nature in a truly human way, and he will have solved all the riddles of our age." He wants man to cease looking for another world: "We need not impress upon the truly human the stamp of the 'divine' to be sure of all his greatness and magnificence." He struggles for "the resolute and sincere return of man, not to 'God,' but to himself," and for "the free and spontaneous creation of a new world founded upon the purely

[1] See Bibliography, p. 299.

human and moral conditions of life." Thus we now have to consider the most energetic and complete acceptance so far of this earthly and human world.

Social and economic conditions, neglected by almost all previous philosophical systems, are brought into the foreground. For the first time, philosophy does not aim, consciously or unconsciously, at death, but at the organization of life as it really is; the world from which God has been excluded is not to be destroyed, but made habitable. For the first time since Goethe, tragedy is neither wantonly conjured up nor hidden by a false optimism, but fought against, deliberately and systematically.

The name of Marx has become a symbol to friend and foe; buried by slogans, the real content of his work has been greatly distorted. To be able to judge his achievements, therefore, we have to consider his work, and that of his collaborator Engels, more thoroughly than most of the doctrines discussed in this book.

Marx takes up Hegel's dialectical method, and it proves of great value to him because he applies it, in accordance with its nature, to a special human problem. But he starts from the most external and material sphere, which seems to have nothing to do with man himself, from a consideration of technical achievements, industry and capitalism. This, however, is also necessary, because it is here that the development, which we tried to indicate by mentioning some of the scientific discoveries of the age, finds its most overwhelming expression. While the dogmas of the natural sciences are gradually uprooted by further scientific investigation, technical progress seems so great and so conclusive that it is in its achievements that the belief in progress finds its strongest support.

Because he thinks in opposites, Marx can recognize the

real magnitude of this progress. "Only they"—that is, the bourgeoisie, the instrument of this progress—"have shown what man's activity can achieve. They have accomplished miracles quite different from the Egyptian pyramids, the Roman aqueducts and the Gothic cathedrals, they have triumphed in campaigns quite different from migrations and crusades. . . . The bourgeoisie, in their class-rule of hardly a hundred years, have created a greater mass of, and more colossal, powers of production than all previous generations together. The harnessing of natural forces, machinery, the application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, the electrical telegraph, the cultivation of whole continents, whole populations created from nothing—what earlier century foresaw that such productive powers were latent in the co-operative work of communities?"

Thanks, however, to the dialectical method which is the basis of his work, Marx does not stop there, but sees at the same time the implications in human terms of this admirable development. He sees, long before anyone else, the devastations wrought by it on man. The same bourgeoisie has left intact "no other bond between man and man but naked self-interest, but callous 'cash-payment.' It has drowned the sacred awe of pious ecstasy, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of bourgeois sensibility, in the ice-cold water of egoistic calculation. It has dissolved personal dignity into exchange value . . . torn off the veil of feeling and affection from family relationships and reduced them to purely financial connections." The result of this development is "open, insolent, direct, arid exploitation."

This is the most important virtue of Marx. He sees the enormous growth due to capitalism and values it correctly; he brings to light and sets out the fundamental

changes which have taken place in this way, but he always sees technical achievements, economics and the state in their relation to man; the bourgeoisie, the class system and the organization of government are for him both the cause and the opponents of material development. He is aware, not only of the external achievements, the conquest of nature and the opening up of every continent, the multiplication of goods and the technical revolution of production, but also of the transformation of man, the changes in society, the effects of co-operative work and the steadily progressing division of labour. He watches the growth of capitalism with the same persistency as he collects proofs of the need of the workers, of their miserable wages and of their abominable working conditions. He sees the simplification of the methods of working, but also the misery of female and child labour which results from it; he recognizes the speeding-up of production by machinery, but he never forgets the excessively long working hours. Praise of technical progress never drowns his indignation.

It is because of this insight into the conditions of human life that he is the first to recognize one of the strangest and, at the same time, one of the most important peculiarities of capitalism. While others, overwhelmed by the general prosperity, hardly pay any attention to the recurrent economic crises, he knows that such crises form an essential part of this development. He knows that the colossal progress of capitalism is connected with the increasing poverty of the majority of mankind, and he sees that the steadily increasing surplus supply of goods, not only fails to prevent, but actually causes the greatest misery, and that, thanks to the capitalist system, the over-production of food can, paradoxically enough, lead to famine and starvation.

Thus he is also the first to detect the looming spectre of unemployment. It sounds very up to date when he proclaims that the bourgeoisie "is unable to reign, because it is unable to guarantee a livelihood to its slave even in his slavery, and because it is forced to let him sink into a position where it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him."

This emphasis upon human forces and this knowledge of the dialectical process whereby man and his material achievements react upon one another are not so self-evident as they may seem to us immediately they are set forth. The present forms of the state and of its administration, of the conditions of production and property, the relations between money and goods, are the result of many centuries' development, so that it is hard to recognize their human origin and purpose; they are accepted as facts, regarded as independent entities, and thus they enslave man instead of serving him.

This development is similar to that which we observed in our consideration of heroism. Everything which ought to be a means of serving man's self-fulfilment becomes an end in itself, for as the conviction of a divine purpose has been lost without the concentration of all attention upon man being achieved, the means become independent and are mistaken for aims. In both cases the consequences are the same. Man cannot achieve an inward satisfaction, because his external achievements, infinitely small when compared with the vastness of the universe, cannot give man real satisfaction, and therefore he is unceasingly driven onward by them, until he can no longer defend himself against these phantoms which he himself has created. Everything which, as a means to a good end, could be a blessing—heroic courage or technical ingenuity, the desire for great deeds or the

creation of great industrial enterprises, the conquest of nature or the rationalization of industry—seems endowed in its independence with a daemonic life which destroys man. It is no accident that Marx and Engels have to defend themselves time and again against the "self-estrangement of man"; most of these problems are really solved as soon as man realizes that human institutions ought to make his life easier, that they are human institutions which he himself has created and which he ought, therefore, to change according to his needs. Inanimate things have no life of their own; it is man who gives them the appearance of being alive.

The importance of this knowledge can be best seen when we consider the concrete embodiment of the means by which industrialism develops—the machine. It is this very triumph of technical progress, the triumph of mechanization, which eventually appears as a disaster. Machines make more and more workers superfluous, robbing them of their bread and their ability to buy what machines produce. They represent the most important cause of the growth of unemployment which turns the whole of the capitalist system into a chaos. Marx's investigation, however, shows very quickly how little the means matters in itself, that its rôle is entirely determined by the aim to which it is put by man. The machine, used in its proper place, could be an excellent instrument for making the earth pleasant to live in, for freeing man from all drudgery, for securing the welfare of everybody and for destroying the last remnants of barbarism. In the capitalist system, however, it is used to increase production and profit and is exploited, therefore, in an excessive and senseless way. Man, striving for external success, loses once more all sense of proportion and becomes intoxicated with the idea of progress for

its own sake, so that the effects of machinery are just the opposite of what they should be. Marx is right in saying: "The contradictions and conflicts which are inseparable from the capitalist application of machinery do not exist, because they do not arise from machinery itself, but from the capitalist use of it . . . machinery considered as such shortens working hours, but in its capitalist application it lengthens them; as such it makes work easier, but in its capitalist application it makes it more intensive; as such it is a victory of man over natural forces, but in its capitalist application it subjugates man to these natural forces; as such it increases the wealth of the producer, but in its capitalist application it impoverishes him." Introduce a reduction of working hours and production planned according to demand, and machinery will be transformed from a curse into a blessing.

The fruitfulness of this knowledge becomes even clearer because of the point from which Marx starts—his consideration of capital. It is here that the belief in the life of what is actually dead is most common, for does it not appear self-evident that capital has to yield interest, profits and dividends? Hardly anybody doubts that money, if everything is as it should be, has to increase. This belief determines all production; capital is used only where it can increase; the stimulus of all economic life is the desire for profit; for its sake production is rationalized and the worker replaced by machinery. No attention is paid to the needs of the masses and their ability to satisfy them. Economic life "comes to a standstill, not where the satisfaction of man's needs, but where production and the making of profit demand such a standstill." Thus it becomes obvious that the autonomy of the world of inanimate objects and the domination of

material agents can only lead to disaster. Crises occur again and again because the increasing quantity of goods cannot be sold with profit and so cannot add to the capital which has been invested, because the workers are no longer able to buy the products. "The most fundamental cause of all real crises is always the poverty of the masses and the restriction of their consumption."

These crises are quite unnecessary. If all human beings lived decently and worked under good conditions, neither the production of food nor that of the means of production themselves would be too large; if it were demand that mattered and not payment and profit, most goods would still be scarce. But crises do occur, although, as economists before Marx already knew, there exist "the same land and the same number of hands as before . . . to produce the food and clothing which—rather than money—form the wealth of a people." Crises occur because, owing to the domination of money, all the conceptions of economic life are wrong.

Marx is the first man to recognize clearly the nature of the economic process. The increase of capital is brought about by the sale of goods, and it is in this way that profit is made. It is necessary, therefore, to explain profit by the origin of the exchange value and the price of goods. These values, however, are not qualities of the things themselves, belonging to them quite independently of man. They are obviously not connected with the usefulness of the things, for something as indispensable as air, for instance, is valueless, very useful things like bread are cheap, and toys expensive. Neither can the exchange value be explained by the functioning of the laws of capitalism, for this already presupposes the increase of capital, nor by competition and the interaction of supply and demand, for these only explain the fluctua-

tions in price, and the price itself also exists even when these factors are in equilibrium. Even commercial calculations which ought to enlighten us concerning price are no help, for they also presuppose what has to be explained. The merchant already takes into consideration the cost of raw-materials, of machines and buildings and of labour, and his capital has to yield interest and profits. Marx is the first to ask in this context the vital questions: Does capital also grow when it lies in the cupboard? Does it beget children? Does it really bear interest as the pear-tree pears? Or what is it that occurs when a new value is created?

These questions already indicate the answer—the only element in such a calculation which really effects a change and creates something new is human labour. Raw-materials and all the means of production form a part of the new goods, but their new value which is different from that of the material used and which makes possible their higher price and the profit from them has only been created by the work which has gone to their making. "As values, all goods are only certain amounts of congealed working hours." [2] This also applies to the raw-materials which have been used, to metals, crops, coal, although in this special case capitalist monopolies increase the profit obtained; yet this is not essential for these conclusions.

Thus, however, it is wrong to believe, as is usually done, that capital yields interest and profits and the possession of land yields rents in the same way as labour is paid by wages, for the connection between labour and wages is essentially a different one. Capital increases only because it provides the means of production, tools, raw-materials and food. But even then it does not increase

[2] Das Kapital, I. Band, 1. Kap.

of itself, but because it can give work to men. For the worker is not paid the whole of the value which he creates; he is made to work longer than would be necessary to make up his pay and creates more value than the equivalent of his wages, and this surplus value is the main source of interest, profits and rents. It creates the income of the capitalist, which he ascribes to the growth of his capital. Money becomes capital only when it increases by itself, and it does so only because workers can be found on the market, workers who are forced, because they cannot produce on their own, to sell their working power without regard to the value which is produced by it. "The secret of the self-increase of capital is solved by its disposing of a certain amount of the unpaid work of others." Yet if it is not the dead capital, but human labour which is the determining factor, then the economic system can be organized according to human needs, so that it functions without crises.

There is one factor, however, which seems to make impossible any simple human solution, and that is the fact that capitalism finds its clearest expression in competition. In it is embodied the fundamentally individualistic attitude of capitalism, and thanks to it everybody is forced to be dependent upon himself, so that it causes the struggle which drives mankind onward and leads to the selection of the most efficient men and to their ever-increasing successes. It is to competition that capitalism owes its power of personal initiative and thus its immense achievements; competition before all else drove capitalism forward to the conquest of the world. At the same time, competition also produces some kind of unity among the capitalist class, for the struggle for profit forces competition in the direction where the greatest profit can be made. Because of this tendency production has

frequently, to a certain degree, to be adapted to demand, for profits are reduced as soon as the supply exceeds the demand. There arises gradually, moreover, as the special circumstances which yield a particularly high rate of profit are exhausted, an acceptance of an average rate of profit, and competitors are forced to become equally interested in the whole of the industrial life of the country. This high regard for competition is the main argument against a planned economy which would eliminate all such elements.

Marx, however, easily refutes this argument too. He shows that capitalism is driven by competition, not only to its greatest development, but also to self-destruction. It is because of competition that capital is invested, time and again, in those branches of production where the highest profit is to be expected, so that these industries are increased excessively and their methods become extraordinarily efficient. But the regulating process of supply and demand only functions after a delay and then incompletely; production, therefore, can only be restricted slowly, and thus crises are inevitable.

The crises, moreover, because of the mobility of capital, become more and more dangerous. Business gradually loses touch with the rest of existence; money is thrown first into this branch of industry and then into another, and any connection between industries, the men who work in them and particular districts is lost. Industry operates more and more in a vacuum with no standards by which to measure it, so that crises becomes more and more serious and occur in an increasingly surprising and devastating manner. At the same time, an increasingly large number of small capitalists are thrown out of business by the efficiency of machinery and and the growing size of factories, and large sections of

the population are forced to lend the money they have saved to the large enterprises. Owing to the existence of this credit, however, the capital at the disposal of industry multiplies almost independently of what, in terms of goods, it really represents, industries are enlarged during a boom far more than the tendency of the market justifies, and the crises concern more and more people who have no direct connection with industry, so that these disasters grow in extent and danger. Competition gradually takes on forms which are so ferocious and destructive that the capitalists are impelled to form large trusts, thus partially excluding this contest even in the capitalist system. But in this way all the faults of competition are only increased; the regulating process of supply and demand works even more unreliably, the destruction of small capitalists and the loss of all connection between industry, workers and particular districts is extended, the attraction of credit is increased, and eventually the crises endanger the whole community.

The average rate of profit, too, only serves the interests of the community to a very limited extent. It transforms the capitalists into a single class by forcing them into opposition to the workers, for every one of them is compelled to make a minimum profit, and thus the community is split into two hostile camps. The fundamental contradiction, indeed, remains insoluble; for competition, on the one hand, makes inevitable the greatest increase in the production of goods, while on the other hand, by the rationalization of production methods and the consequent lowering of wages, it reduces the market for these goods, thus destroying the possibility of existence for the over-developed enterprises. Competition can appear fruitful so long as there are new markets to be conquered, or so long as wars create artificial booms,

but the rarer such accidental circumstances become, the more clearly is the true nature of competition seen, and the more frequent, protracted and difficult must the crises become. Yet even under favourable circumstances competition develops a mechanism at the expense of human beings. "Capitalist production, with all its thrift, is most wasteful with human material"; under the whip of competition it becomes "a squanderer . . . not only of flesh and blood, but also of nerve and brain"; it leads to "the most enormous frustration of individual development," and this waste, too, must eventually cause the breakdown of the mechanism which cannot, after all, exist without man.

Competition is nothing but a manifestation of the "natural growth" of capitalism. The magnificent organization of the single factory is confronted with the complete anarchy of the whole of the economic system because of competition, which is an admission of the inability of capitalists to come to an agreement and to plan man's economic existence, as a result of which everything develops quite haphazardly and by accident. The unfettered development of technical progress, admirable in itself, becomes increasingly destructive and barbarous —a mighty effort which leads nowhere.

This clear recognition of the nature of individualist competition opens the way to a planned organization of the community in which personal initiative can serve, not a disastrous system, but mankind. If this enormous competitive struggle for profits does not, in fact, serve any good purpose, it is obviously desirable to replace it by an adjustment of human work to human needs, and to direct economic life towards healthier aims. At the same time, the attack on competition and the analysis of the material factors represent a clarification of the human

problems, for such an analysis of the capitalist system implies a refutation of all those errors to which man has been exposed in all his endeavours since the Renaissance. The beginning of capitalism coincides with that of the Renaissance, with the liberation of man from all supernatural chains, and its greatest development, the desperate competition for profit, is the embodiment of that struggle for existence which is proclaimed at the same time by philosophers. "The natural behaviour of the animal appears here as the summit of human development." But now it is easy to see how senseless it is to give a human meaning to this supposed natural law of the struggle for existence, for the struggle of each man against his fellows leads only to chaos and catastrophe. Violence as an end in itself must needs produce its logical result—destruction.

Another blow is thus struck at the roots of the cults of individualism and heroism. The disaster which ends the *Nibelungenlied* is repeated by the progress of capitalism; even the greatest deeds of heroism, even the most admirable courage and the boldest spirit of enterprise joined with the greatest possible strength can achieve nothing fruitful if they blindly serve what is inhuman and material, if they serve the blind lust for gold. We may no longer allow ourselves to be swept away by the glory of single deeds and events, nor by a magnificent but isolated achievement. We must, at last, see life as a whole and ask what end is served and what meaning possessed by this delusive glory. After beginnings which seemed doubtful the liberation of man, begun at the Renaissance, now seems to lead beyond doubt to the concentration of all attention upon man; no longer is it the great deed which matters nor the great man alone, but every single man, the whole society, the

community. The tragic catastrophe, by preventing criticism of the individual, can no longer conceal human failure.

We cannot enter here into further particulars of this theory, which is most thoroughly and almost flawlessly developed by Marx. It is no accident that he is one of the few philosophers of history whose prophecies, despite some important mistakes, have proved correct in concrete details for over three quarters of a century. So clearly did he recognize, even in its beginnings, the nature of capitalism that he was able to prophecy the main line of its development. Marx's critique of capitalism can only be compared with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Facts, previously mysterious, are made clear and comprehensible by his ability to penetrate the complication and confusion of the all-powerful system. Suddenly its real structure becomes visible, every detail is in its place, and the incomprehensible chaos is explained to us. Such an achievement is like that of Kant in that it, too, is essentially revolutionary. Because the existing order is clearly understood, the whole discussion is lifted to another level, and from our new viewpoint we can see beyond those facts which previous critics have considered and criticized. The clear presentation of the reigning system implies its negation and overthrow, for the criticism of the existing world indicates the shape of a future one. The analysis of capitalist society makes visible the outlines of a socialist society.

Unfortunately, however, the work of Marx is similar to that of Kant in another respect too; far more than Kant, he is unable to follow up his own achievements, and when he has developed his ideas to their highest point he seems to set out to nullify them. His negative achievement, the critique of capitalism, is fine and com-

prehensive, but he does not succeed in developing the alternative of socialism. From all that has been said we can certainly see already that, theoretically, the change to a socialist economy offers no insuperable difficulties; it could be brought about if man were able to change in accordance with it, so that his character made necessary the economic change. But Marx regards all human forces too as material forces and denies the importance of spiritual changes, which are in fact the basis of all his conclusions. He denies the power of ideas, considering them as only secondary, as consequences of material conditions. The compassion and indignation which fill his work find no place in his philosophy; he can think only in the material terms which he is opposing, so that he remains imprisoned within the destructive system which he attacks. He does not acknowledge those human elements to which he owes all his discoveries, and his socialism, therefore, remains an inadequate and even a dangerous scheme.

Marx himself considers it the highest merit of his works that he has made historical materialism their basis, but it is this very fact that is his fundamental mistake. He bases his conclusions on the dialectical method of Hegel which he accepts and praises, and which he corrects only so far as he denies Hegel's overestimation of the spirit, replacing it by the material world which he considers as alone real. "The mystification which dialectics undergoes in Hegel's hands in no way precludes him from being the first who has comprehensively and consciously shown its general way of operating. In his works, it is standing on its head. One has to turn it upside down to discover the rational core beneath the mystical covering." [3] In fact, however, this reversal is totally insufficient.

[3] Das Kapital, Nachwort zur 2. Auflage.

Dialectical materialism is as much a contradiction as dialectical idealism. Dialectics could only help man to understand his existence better if it were freed from its one-sidedness and founded upon a recognition of the action and reaction of spirit and matter.

Marx expresses his fundamental materialist conviction when he says: "It is not the consciousness of man which determines his existence, but on the contrary his social existence which determines his consciousness." This statement is in itself quite opposed to the dialectical method; existence and consciousness mutually affect one another, and since we can observe nothing but these mutual effects, it is only when we pay due regard to both sides that we are actually thinking dialectically.

Marx, like all materialists, simplifies too much. He explains Kant, for instance, as the expression of the social conditions of his life, and thus he does not even need to take the trouble to try to understand him; he disregards completely the difference between experience and metaphysics and seems not to comprehend that the proofs with which he tries to refute the hated "thing per se" prove nothing, because they belong to the sphere of experience and not to that of the absolute. Thus he does not recognize the limited significance of Hegel's work and sees in him "the conclusion of the whole movement since Kant" or even of "philosophy in general," and is able very easily to make materialist conclusions appear realistic and full of meaning by confronting them only with the over-abstract conclusions of Hegel. But the result is that, through the materialist distortions of dialectics, all Hegel's mistakes find their way back into thought. Marx remains on the same level as Hegel and falls a victim to the same errors, in spite of his superficial opposition to the concentration of attention upon the

spirit. This kind of dialectics only proves useful when Marx considers the special problems of capitalism whose basis really is materialist, but it cannot deal with the whole of existence. It leads Marx away, therefore, from the knowledge of those human factors which are already latent in his criticism.

None of the proofs with which Marx supports his materialism can be vindicated. In the most comprehensive exposition of his theory he starts with the prehistory of mankind. To start from this point already seems dubious, for human prehistory is to a large extent unknown—a tissue of arbitrary assumptions—from which one can prove whatever one wishes. He considers "the first historical action" of mankind, for instance, to be "the production of the means of satisfying those needs" —eating, drinking, homes, clothing—"the production of the necessities of material life itself." But by man's "first historical action" we certainly mean that action which first distinguished him from the animals, and it seems probable that his material needs were satisfied at first in a very primitive way, hardly differently from those of the animals, and that the first specifically human characteristics to appear were spiritual ones—awe or joy, respect or laughter.

Marx regards as the second event in history the production of tools and instruments by which to satisfy these needs and the creation, therefore, of the secondary need for these instruments. This indeed is likely, but it is hardly the second event, for it is possible for this increase in needs to occur when a very high spiritual level has already been reached and complicated religious ideas developed. Recent investigations have shown that savages, who are very primitive in a material sense, possess a most complicated spiritual life, very different

from ours, but by no means primitive. The third of these events for Marx is the organization of individuals into families, but in this he is certainly wrong, for it is usually preceded by a division into tribes and a matriarchal system. Marx's fourth event in history, therefore, the development of a community system of production, usually occurs before the stage which he considers as the third, neither is it necessarily a "historical" one, for ant-hills and beehives do not come within the scope of history.

His fundamental assertion, therefore, that the development of consciousness is the fifth event in history and that it must be preceded by the four others is based upon no adequate foundation; it is far more probable that the awakening of consciousness causes the other events to take place. In any case, it is impossible to prove materialism in this way and to justify the relegation of spiritual factors to a subordinate position. Neither is it convincing when Marx bases upon this historical picture the assertion that every spiritual change results from a change in the methods of production. It is no accident that he only refers in a few sentences to the ages between prehistory and the development of the bourgeoisie, for his views do not carry conviction when applied to the long economically stable periods of the Middle Ages in Europe nor to those in Asia. They apply exclusively to capitalism.

The psychological foundations of Marx's materialist conclusions are as dubious. His greatest merit, perhaps, lies in his asking for the first time: What impression do the existing philosophical systems make on one if one is hungry? What is the world like when the necessities of life are lacking? But he thinks that the answer is the demand that the satisfaction of these needs must precede any other endeavour, and that everything else depends

on these material needs. The change in methods of production, the organization of work and power in the community, the distribution of property between different classes—these are for him the sole causes of all spiritual and mental development. He calls all ideas, "legal and political institutions, the religious, philosophical and other ways of thinking current in each historical period" only "the superstructure" of the conditions of production; "the spirit itself is only the highest product of matter." First give man bread, and everything else will follow automatically. Yet this is obviously untrue; men are perfectly ready to accept hunger and suffering for the sake of an ideal which promises them no material advantage, and the more demands are made on them, the more sacrifices they have to make, the more easily can an idea be translated into action. Marxism, too, has succeeded best when it has demanded sacrifices from its adherents.

Certainly, the promise of satisfying material needs, of securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number, has great power, but an ideal which promises the satisfaction of spiritual needs is at least as powerful. Even the materialists have first to appeal to men's minds, and these demands are powerful only so long as they are directed towards remote aims; they lose their power as soon as they have been partially achieved. Ideas, certainly, are influenced by material development; the organization of the modern state is in particular dependent upon its material basis. But it is equally certain that the development of new ideas, in its turn, influences material life and produces fundamental changes in the economic system and in the organization of the state and of society. Marx's claim that the lack of sugar and coffee, resulting from Napoleon's Continental System, was the real cause

of the wars of liberation against him is the merest nonsense; in this way he is only led to an underestimation of nationalism, whose real strength he never recognizes.

The satisfaction of men's hunger, even, depends above all upon a spiritual development. There are no material obstacles to the production of enough bread for everybody, but man's ideals and his activities have to be changed so that he thinks the provision of bread for everybody important. Seen from the material point of view, the distribution of goods is a question of power, but to change the use which is made of power, one has first to win the mass of the people over to the new conviction. The young Marx himself says: "Material power must be overthrown by material power, but theory, too, becomes material power as soon as it seizes the masses," and he acts throughout his life according to this principle, which finds no place in his theory. Even Marx could struggle for the proletariat only because the value placed on man's personality had grown so much since the Renaissance that, at last, every single human being was seen to matter. The idea of the importance of every individual had become mature and thus his discoveries were made possible.

These unjustifiable generalizations, however, are bound to have destructive consequences. Marx's explanation of all ages and of all human activity by the laws which explain capitalism falsifies his interpretation of history when he wants to find a way out of the capitalist system and to plan and bring about the transition to socialism. He starts with magnificent eloquence. The call to oppose reaction has rarely been supported by more factual knowledge nor at the same time by more fire and enthusiasm, and never has the

demand for world-revolution found a more perfect expression than in the last sentences of the *Communist Manifesto*. But, by his one-sided application of dialectics, Marx is forced to draw wrong conclusions; like Hegel, he wants to believe in an inevitable development and improvement of the whole world, and thus the 19th century's disastrous belief in progress creeps into his work too. He proclaims: "All historical circumstances, which follow each other, are but transient steps in the infinite development of human society, from lower towards higher forms."

He believes that the inevitability of communism can be deduced from his philosophy of history. "Communism is, for us, not a state of affairs which ought to be established, nor an ideal to which reality has to conform. We call communism the actual trend of events." The appeal for revolution is weakened by questionable prophecies, derived from this philosophy of history; capitalism will turn simply, automatically and necessarily into its dialectical opposite—socialism. It is true that Marx emphasizes that "socialism cannot fulfil itself without revolutions," but these revolutions are seen as a part of historical necessity. Sometimes he even says that the proletarian revolution must come, "if the whole of society is not to go under," thus hinting that there is another possibility besides inevitable victory, but he pays no attention to this reservation, and again and again comes the proclamation that the victory of socialism follows from the laws of necessity. His appeals for revolution are always supported by proofs that the victory of the proletariat is in any case inevitable.

Thanks to this belief in progress, Marx is always wrong when he believes he can distinguish the point at which capitalism changes over to socialism, for he overrates the

simplicity of this development. Capitalism tends to cause ever greater amalgamations of enterprises. Marx concludes that the large trusts will soon destroy all the transitory stages of pre-industrial and early capitalist economics, so preparing the way for the coming of nationalization, when eventually all power will automatically be taken over by the workers. For he believes that, owing to the development of huge and technically very efficient capitalist concerns, the skilled artisans, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants must completely disappear; "the middle classes are bound more and more to disappear, until the world is divided into millionaires and paupers, into the owners of large estates and farmhands." It is just these half-capitalist forms of social activity, however, which are so extremely tenacious; moreover a new and large middle class is created by the growth of large concerns—that of the employees who do not in the least wish to be proletarians; nor does this take into account the increasing number of people in the professions. It is quite impossible, therefore, that the middle classes, during the reign of capitalism, could diminish so far as to lose their importance. Yet because of this it is impossible, too, that the dialectical change-over to socialism can come about by itself, for the workers do not find themselves in such an overwhelming majority that they can easily seize power. What really matters, therefore, is neither this process nor the recognition of its necessity, but revolutionary energy itself.

It is because of this error that some of the prophecies of Marx have proved to be entirely wrong. He thought that social revolution would break out first "in England, France, Germany," because capitalism there had made the greatest progress, but in fact it occurred first in Russia, a country of which Marx did not think at all, and it

occurred because there the revolutionary energy was the greatest. According to the Marxist meaning of the word, it would not have been "necessary" there for a long time after it actually came, for the early forms of capitalism were almost entirely predominant. This "necessity" is as little reliable as any other product of the philosophy of history. After the event it is easy to prove that revolution was necessary at that time, but it is impossible, because there are imponderable human factors to be taken into account, to make any exact forecast.

As a consequence, most of Marx's revolutionary propaganda is also wrong. The class-struggle which he preaches is, quite apart from any moral consideration, entirely insufficient. Owing to the continued existence of the middle classes, there are always two camps of approximately equal size, so that the mere fact of belonging to a particular class cannot lead to victory through superiority of numbers. What really matters is to persuade men by the power of ideas to join the revolutionary camp, without considering what class they belong to, for if there are two opposed camps of equal size, the decision will turn upon the power of their ideas. Every movement, moreover, always finds its most valuable supporters in the camp of its original adversaries, and because the governing classes are the more educated, it is from them that leaders often arise. Neither Marx nor Engels, after all, belonged to the working class.

A cause can only be victorious if its demands are wide enough to attract everybody; if it puts forward claims for the support of one class only, it repulses its adversaries instead of attracting them. One class is forced to oppose the other at any price and is driven, therefore, to extreme opinions which would hardly otherwise seem defensible, nor can those elements of

it be attracted who might otherwise change their allegiance. Finally, one class is driven to use violence which can only lead to a victory in which its original ideas are bound to suffer. Marx himself, in his study of competition, opposes the use of force, and Engels, in a particular instance, declares: "Force cannot make money, but at the best can only take away money which has been made before," and force is futile, because "this is of no great use. . . . Eventually, money must still be made by economic production." But the wider application to human affairs in general of this knowledge too is never attempted.

The increasing Utopianism of Marx's propaganda, which follows from the belief in progress and against which he had originally struggled, is even more misleading. In the same way as Hegel, he sees world history as leading towards a definite and final goal. He thinks that because the worst conditions of human life are embodied in the lot of the proletariat, their revolution must destroy everything bad in our world. "The victory of the working classes makes an end forever of all classes and all class-governments"; it abolishes "the conditions which make possible the existence of any class struggle, all the social classes and thus its own rule as a class." Even the state, which Marx considers as nothing but "a machine for the suppression of one class by another," entirely ceases to exist. Division of labour, which is so dangerous and harmful to the worker because it degrades him into being a part of the machine, must also disappear: "The mechanized factory does away with the specialist and the idiocy of specialization." The communist organization of society makes it unnecessary for anyone to have "a limited circle of activity," for as machine work is easy, everybody can perform all kinds of work, so he will be allowed to

change from one kind of work to another. The opposition between town and country, too, will disappear, private property will be abolished, and the conflict between different states and nations will cease. The millennium will begin, and nothing remain to be done.

These conclusions are to some extent completely wrong; the mechanized factory, for instance, far from abolishing specialization, has considerably increased it. To some extent, Marx leaves unexplained the manner in which his ideals—the reconciliation of the interests of town and country for instance—could be achieved. Nor does he clearly define the terms in which he is speaking; in the matter of private property, for example, he never differentiates clearly between that private capital which ought to be abolished, and that indispensable personal property which is the reward of working. Other ideas are left as mere phrases; we are never told what a "stateless society" really is. What is most disastrous, however, is the fact that he believes in the coming of a material Utopia at all, so that all the faults of the belief in progress show themselves.

To have such a Utopia as one's aim makes everything appear perfectly simple, for it is really not difficult, as we have several times had to emphasize, to create theoretically ideal conditions—even the transformation of a capitalist into a socialist society is very easy in theory. Yet it soon becomes obvious that this transformation does not happen and that, therefore, it cannot be so simple, and as the emphasis on a Utopia has made man overlook all the obstacles, the whole teaching is discarded, including those parts of it which are valuable. Moreover, such a doctrine weakens man, for it promises the coming of ideal conditions in the near future, and, compared with that, the small and strenuous steps which he has to take at first

appear petty and unimportant, so that he prefers to look forward to the imminent realization of the ideal rather than to do anything meanwhile. At the same time, as man is impelled by his nature to aspire to something beyond his immediate aim he becomes tired of the Utopian promise even before it is fulfilled. Endeavour, bounded by finite and exact limits, cannot for long fill him with enthusiasm.

Marx must be blamed, therefore, for the failure of those parties which adhere to his teaching. It is true that superficially he is not guilty, for his immediate practical political advice, often correct, has frequently not been followed. Yet his guilt lies deeper, in that his advice is usually contradicted by his own theoretical teaching.

An appeal for revolution which is linked with the proclamation of it as an historically necessary progress is a contradiction in itself; one cannot make a free revolution in the name of an automatically functioning historical necessity, leading of itself to Utopian perfection. Such a contradiction must paralyze any real movement, and, in fact, the socialist movement has split as a result. On the one hand there is the revolutionary party which relies blindly upon the violent use of mere power and misses the opportunities for the gradual realization of socialism, and on the other hand there is the evolutionary party which relies upon historical necessity and usually misses the opportunities to use power. On the one hand the struggle for a communist society has been replaced by obedience to a totalitarian national state, and on the other hand all man's endeavours have been concentrated upon the enlargement of an organization which does not make men do anything and which is conspicuous for its lack of enthusiasm. Both parties rightly claim descent from Marx, and both are driven to their mistakes by him.

Marx does not take any human obstacles into consideration. It is true that he says on one occasion: "The communal organization of production by society will need quite different men," but nothing is done to change men; they remain, in his system, instruments for the production of surplus value. Thus, however, he has a blind faith in the machinery of socialism and never investigates what forms it can take. It is very probable that socialism has to come and will come, either by historical necessity or by revolution, but it can come as the fulfilment of the human ideal which it originally represented, or by the use of a system which utterly destroys the freedom and dignity of man for which Marx fought. Marx and his followers do not see that socialism can be either a blessing or a curse. They do not see that a bad kind of socialism is also possible, brought about either by a tyrannical military power or by an inhuman bureaucracy, and we are in danger of this kind of socialism if its foundations in the human spirit are not developed, if the use of force is allowed or even encouraged, and if human endeavour is replaced by a mechanical philosophy of history. It is because of Marx that we are caught today between the two dangers of an inhuman capitalism and an inhuman socialism.

How different could have been the consequences of his teaching had he relied upon his compassion, his humane feelings and those ideals to which he really owed all his discoveries! A purely materialist socialism omits from its calculations most of man's more valuable emotions, but an endeavour to give expression to these feelings would of necessity include the bringing about of socialism. Even better conditions are only given a meaning by the change in man. Dead institutions, as Marx knew when he considered machinery, are meaningless in

themselves, for they can be used in entirely different ways; without an inner change in man himself, therefore, even the greatest improvement in external conditions need mean nothing. Only a change within man himself can guarantee a real improvement.

The necessary change from the ideal of the hero to that of the community is a far greater and more difficult task than the mere external alteration of conditions, but it is also a far more promising one. It is founded upon the real feelings of men and does not deceive them, for the highest ideals of man can never be reached, the task remains infinite and thus continually inspiring, and yet every step brings some definite achievement. It can bring out all of man's powers, especially the sense of responsibility which Marx neglects, so that everybody has an immediate duty, without waiting for a remote future, because his is the responsibility for each of his actions. Moreover, it is here alone that the best elements of true heroism can be used. Each individual, because he is responsible for all his actions, is dependent upon himself, but he may neither rely upon external changes nor allow himself to indulge in a boundless and irresponsible individualism; he must direct all his efforts towards educating himself to become a good member of society. Everybody, at bottom, feels the urge to escape from his freedom and his responsibility, and any kind of Utopian dream only makes this escape easier, so that the change of man which could make Utopian conditions possible is not brought about. If he is held to his sense of responsibility, however, he cannot escape and has to change himself, and thus improvement becomes possible.

But how can man be changed when everything human is denied, when only "class morality" is recognized, and when "right and justice, brotherhood and freedom" are

called "lip-service to modern mythological gods"? Marx himself is certainly moved by these ideas, for his derivation of all value from human work is no mere scientific discovery, but rather an idea, a demand which rests upon ethical laws. It is the demand that income obtained without working for it must be abolished, that the useless accumulation of wealth by individuals must give way to general welfare, and that the deadly competitive struggle for profits must be replaced by the co-operation of the whole community. His idea serves to make clearer the pattern of a peaceful organization of the economic world for an existence which is worthy of man; it is a fine and powerful expression of compassion for the poor and suppressed, for love of justice, for love of mankind. And these ethical motives are what could have the power to convince, not only the members of one class, but everybody. Such an attitude, and only such an attitude, could have the power to inspire, to awaken courage and strength, to justify sacrifices and to change man, and so to create a movement able to rely upon an inner strength. These elements in Marx's teaching could have changed the world, but they are the very elements which he despises.

If we concentrate all our attention upon what we oppose, we run the risk of still being obsessed by it, of being unable to conceive of any other belief, and eventually of being subjugated by it, because we cannot exist without any positive ideas at all. For Marx, because he neglects all human factors, this element—rejected, but retaining its positive powers—is, despite all its faults, capitalism. He is never able to think in any other terms nor to maintain attitudes different from those which it enforces, and thus he is finally overcome by it, transplanting all its errors, all its violence and cruelty, into the theory of socialism. Thanks to a wrong metaphysical system,

thanks to the materialist belief in progress, what could have begun a new age begins instead a barren period of mass-organization. For the sake of a wrong dogma the possibility that the great historical event, the awakening of the proletariat, could have been the beginning of a fundamentally different attitude in men is destroyed.

It is true that Marx could not know that the dialectical reaction against him, which ought to have corrected his teaching, would not come at all. It is a disgrace to his opponents that his endeavours in the social field have found so little response from their side, that they were angrily rejected without any attempt being made to understand them. Even a Nietzsche thinks he is entitled to discard socialism without in the least knowing what it is; he abuses "the poison-bearing propagation of that epidemic disease which, as a socialist scabies of the heart, now more and more quickly seizes the masses"; in face of the immense misery of the workers he dares to pronounce: "It is not hunger which produces revolutions, but the fact that for the people 'l'appétit vient en mangeant.'" The teaching of Marx is disastrous, but the causes of his failure are much more honourable. The human feelings, which his opponents lack, are felt all too strongly for him, and he is inclined to despise and to mock them in theory because, in fact, he is not able to exclude them from his life.

The life of Marx was one of magnificent consistency and devotion. He put himself at the disposal of every attempt at revolution, even if he recognized its futility and advised against it, as he did in the case of the *Commune* in Paris. His poverty and misery, his sufferings and frequent illness can only be compared with those of Dostoevsky, yet like Dostoevsky he remained unswervingly faithful to his ideal. He never tried to free himself

from his infinitely painful exile by making degrading concessions, even if they seemed small compared with his afflictions. And this life was protected and made possible by one of the most beautiful friendships of which we know. Engels saw that Marx was able to achieve what he himself was not, and he entirely subordinated his life, therefore, to the needs of Marx. Although he had enough to live on, he went back into the "vile commerce" which he hated, so that he could support Marx. Sometimes he obtained requests for articles by Marx from newspapers and periodicals, and frequently he even had to write the articles himself, yet he never became impatient with the nervous invalid, and, without thinking of himself, looked after him until his death.

Neither did Engels ever overestimate the part he himself played, nor complain that he was overshadowed by Marx's fame. Long after the death of Marx, when socialism had already spread all over the world, many people tried to attribute to Engels the honour of its foundation, but he declared with an honesty and firmness which we must admire: "Recently my share in the development of this theory has been often pointed out, and so I cannot avoid saying here those few words which will settle this point. I cannot deny that I had a certain independent share both in the foundation and in the elaboration of the theory before and during the fourteen years of my collaboration with Marx. But the greatest part of the leading and fundamental principles . . . and especially their final sharp formulation, belong to Marx. What I contributed—apart perhaps from a few special sections—Marx could also have performed without me. What Marx achieved, I could not have done. Marx stood higher, saw farther, had a wider view and a quicker understanding than all of us. Marx was a genius, we others, at best, have

talent. Without him, the theory would not be today what it is. Therefore it rightly bears his name."

Their collaboration was at the same time, however, a genuine one; it was so close that we cannot separate their shares in different works. It is understandable that such men did not feel the necessity to lay special emphasis upon the human elements in their work. But their influence is distorted by the fact that they did not, and for us the consequences of this omission are serious. What in reality is it, this humanity, experienced in their lives, yet mocked in their theories—this humanity, which is so difficult to grasp and on which, nevertheless, any further development seems to depend?

CHAPTER IX

TOLSTOY: THE STRUGGLE FOR VIRTUE

THE evolution of an attitude of mind which rejects heroism and emphasizes the leading of a moral life is made very difficult by great obstacles within man. The ideal of heroism appeals to instincts within us which satisfy our pride and promise us enjoyment, while the commands of morality, on the contrary, require a high degree of self-abnegation. We must abandon an attitude of suspicion to our fate and give up all the reserve we employ to defend ourselves against our fellow men and trust both —a step which can hardly be justified intellectually and which demands great willingness to be hurt. Time threatens us, for it is no longer possible to strive for one great deed alone, without regarding anything else; every moment, every interval of time, has to be rightly used, for morality demands that we consider constantly how we use the time given to us. No longer may we distract and overwhelm ourselves with external activities, for the whole of life is transformed into an inner struggle. This struggle, moreover, is one which is ridiculed by most people; we have to follow a path which the overwhelming majority rejects as foolish.

So long as man looks to his intellect to weigh advantages and disadvantages and to replace faith in absolute standards by an attempt to calculate the results of his actions, such a decision seems to ask too much. How can he know the inner happiness, the deep security and the serenity which are claimed by the man who lives by moral

sanctions as coming from such a life alone? Only such a believer sees the choice as decided for him—the choice between a seemingly comfortable life which, as we have seen time and again, means nothing but destruction, and a difficult struggle which is in itself salvation.

These psychological difficulties are increased in Europe by the power of tradition; the influence of the Renaissance is so deeply rooted here that a change seems almost impossible. Even the language in which we discuss the problems has been determined by the Renaissance; it is no accident that the main characters of novels and plays are called heroes, even if they are, in fact, the opposite of real heroes.

How difficult it is to overcome these obstacles is shown most clearly by the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Of all philosophers, he probably understands best the fundamental feelings and aspirations of man, and sees most clearly man's spiritual nature and the significance of religions. Yet even he is forced to start with a falsification of Kant's teaching; even he looks for the one exception which, in spite of Kant's discoveries, makes metaphysics possible, and he smuggles it into his philosophy. He considers the Will as the real thing per se, the Will, the strongest impulse to heroism. The highest development of feeling for him, however, is pity, that dangerous love for men, in which egotism, self-indulgence and true compassion can be inextricably mixed and which threatens to weaken all moral power. His philosophy, too, leads finally to a philosophy of death; for, as he sees only that kind of will which leads to heroism as the true essence of reality and yet struggles for human ideals, he is forced to long for the overcoming of Will, for annihilation, for Nirvana.

Because of all these mistakes, his philosophy becomes what a true philosophy must not be, for in spite of the

magnificent clarity of his mind and his other great merits, he does not make binding demands. His followers are excused for revelling in beautiful feelings without taking them seriously, because the ideal can be achieved only beyond our world, and so they may indulge their inclinations here; as nothing in the present world is of real significance, they can abandon themselves to enjoyment and pleasure. Any link between this life and the next which could put man under definite obligations is lacking. A consciously cultivated love of mankind in the abstract and an appreciation of religion as an aesthetic pleasure—the final stages of such a line of development become threateningly visible.

Thus, however, it seems the work of providence that at this time a new influence begins to be felt in European culture—that of a nation which is almost untouched by the tradition of the Renaissance, so that it confronts modern life almost in the attitude of the Middle Ages. And indeed, as soon as Russia takes on European culture, she produces a man who brings the whole of Europe under his spell.[1]

Tolstoy is one of the first Russians to reach a leading place in the cultural life of Europe without giving up his specifically national character; he is the first, as Dostoevsky says, to pronounce the "Russian word" so that it can be understood in Europe. At the same time, his novels prove him to be one of the most perfect artists of the 19th century. In his life, too, he reached heights which must appear to every European as the aim of the highest ambition. By the middle of his life, he achieved fame everywhere in Europe and an honoured position in the highest circles of Russian society; his wealth was great enough to satisfy even his most extravagant demands; his

[1] See Bibliography, p. 299.

family life, not yet troubled, was very happy; and the maturity and sureness of his artistic creation and his outward and inner independence seemed to make unlimited further successes certain. In addition, his works show how deeply he was able to enjoy the pleasures of sensual and social existence, and above all, his family life. Some torturing doubts, some inner restlessness can be dimly seen, but he always succeeded in suppressing them.

One day, however, he tells us, he was overcome by this "moral disease," so that he was led to the verge of suicide, but at the same time seized with terror of death, unable to face the question: What have you done with your life when, any minute, you may die? At this moment, he threw away everything he had achieved in order to try to live a perfectly Christian life. His attempt, therefore, because the issues on both sides are so great, is bound to be of the greatest importance for us.

Tolstoy, too, starts from an awareness of social conditions, and with no less clarity and vigour than Marx he analyses the capitalist system. He sees humanity as divided "into two classes, one working, oppressed, living in misery and suffering, and a second which is idle, oppressing, living in abundance and enjoying themselves." "Everywhere, one or two men in a thousand live in such a way that, without working themselves, they squander and eat up in one day what could feed hundreds of men for a year; they wear clothes which cost thousands of roubles, live in palaces which could accommodate hundreds of workers and, to satisfy their whims, they waste the labours of millions of working days." They can do this because the capitalist "gives to the workers only what is absolutely necessary for them to go on living"; he "steals from the worker, year by year, the most part of his

earnings and takes it himself." Tolstoy knows that value can be created only by work: "Taxes, from whomsoever they are taken, are derived from work." He knows as well as Marx that the property of great landowners, which is most important in perpetuating these conditions, has not been acquired naturally, but by robbery and violence. He rejects the belief that wealth comes from the self-denial and thrift of the capitalist: "We need only investigate the development of all great fortunes to convince ourselves of the opposite. Fortunes are acquired either by violence . . . or by avarice, by a great coup, or by continuous cheating. . . . Work does not make men rich, it makes them hunchbacked."

He recognizes too, just as Marx does, that the oppressed classes, the workers and the peasants, share some of the responsibility for these conditions. "Fortresses and cannons and rifles do not shoot people by themselves, prisons do not lock people up by themselves, gallows do not hang anybody, churches do not cheat anybody, customs stations do not hold anybody up, factories and palaces do not build and maintain themselves—all these things are done by men!" Yet how do these men behave when they have to suffer under these conditions? "When the peasants want to seize the land which is legally the property of a man who does not work, or when striking workers want to prevent those who are not on strike from working, then these same peasants, who have been robbed of their land, these same payers of taxes and workers, come, equipped with rifles, and force their brothers to give back the land, to pay the taxes and to resume work." Tolstoy also knows, therefore, that this social order must lead to catastrophe. "We know beyond any doubt that we are standing on the edge of ruin." In 1893 he already sees Europe "on the threshold of war and internal revolu-

tion which will bring about such misery and destruction . . . that, compared with them, the terrors of the year 1793 will appear as a mere trifle."

But he sees the psychological causes of these conditions more clearly than Marx. He sees, in particular, that to possess a great fortune is almost a proof that a man lacks humane qualities: "The more moral a man is, the sooner does he lose the fortune which he already possesses, and the more immoral he is, the more surely does he acquire a fortune and keep it." To have, too, this much-sought-after and worshipped power does not merit praise: "Striving for power is compatible, not with goodness, but with those qualities which are opposed to goodness, with pride, cunning, cruelty. . . . The wicked always have power over the good, or at least the less wicked. The probability always is, therefore, that . . . not the better people are in power, but on the contrary the more wicked ones."

Such conditions are accepted only because men have lost their belief in humanity and come to attribute an exaggerated importance to external achievements. So thoughtless are they that they even believe that "the titles of prince, of minister, of governor . . . of officer . . . are something real and very important." This terrible lack of thought in most men is the most frightening element in our situation. Class distinctions exist although "everybody in our times knows that all men have the same claim to life and to the goods of this world, and that one group is neither better nor worse than the other." Nobody really believes in the laws which he obeys; everyone, at bottom, is ashamed of the immoral actions which he is usually driven to commit, yet he does not even notice the contradiction between the way he thinks and the way he acts. Almost all of us are horrifyingly able "to do things

which are flatly forbidden by our convictions and our consciences, without even being aware of what we are doing."

Tolstoy sees this contradiction most strikingly in our common conviction that we live in Christian countries. All states are supported by armies, and all laws, all property, all public institutions are maintained, in the last resort, by the willingness of Christians to murder for their sake, and to hinder any offence against them by force and, if necessary, by killing. This is already sufficient to prove that no army can be Christian, but it can also be proved in every detail. The soldier is forced to take an oath on the Bible in which the taking of oaths is forbidden, and he must swear to do all the things which the Bible condemns; he must be prepared to lead an immoral life, to use force, to kill, to sell his soul, in short, to render to Caesar the things which belong to God. His education as a soldier thoroughly destroys whatever of Christianity there is within him: "He is put into the dress of a fool, commanded to jump, to twist his body about and to salute." He is transformed, by punishment and coercion, into a coarse and inhuman instrument without a will of its own. This education is in the service of the "Christian war," in which everything Christian must infallibly be destroyed: "Every year of war . . . makes men more immoral than could millions of robberies, fire-raisings, murders, committed by single men under the influence of passions, in the course of hundreds of years." Such a systematic and legalized murder, transformed into an ideal and an occupation, must destroy everything human.

The "Christian army" is nothing but a shameless lie. "Men who call themselves Christians, and who thus profess liberty, equality and fraternity, are prepared, in the name of freedom, for utterly servile and degrading

obedience, in the name of equality for the sharpest and most stupid divisions of men according to externals into higher and lower ranks, into allies and enemies, and in the name of fraternity they are ready to kill their brothers." The inability even of the Church to recognize these contradictions is particularly frightening. The priest, at least, ought to be shocked when, administering the oath to soldiers, "he takes up the cross, the same cross to which Jesus has been nailed, because He refused to do what this man, His pretended servant, orders others to do." Yet we see, again and again, that "the representatives of Christ, in their prayer, bless murderers who stand in line, aiming with their rifles at their brothers, and that priests . . . of any denomination . . . take part in executions and, by their presence, acknowledge the compatibility of manslaughter and Christianity."

Thanks to this concern for man's problems Tolstoy rapidly advances from negative criticism to the setting forth of a new way of life. His criticism already contains one very important positive element, namely its demonstration that power can only be effectively exercised with the help of the oppressed, and that it is dependent, therefore, upon public opinion, upon the convictions of men, and upon the force of ideas. "The situation of Christendom with its . . . millions of stupefied men, willing, like chained dogs, to spring at those on whom they are set by their masters, would be terrible if it were mainly a product of force, but it is mainly a product of public opinion. And what has been created by public opinion, not only can, but also will be destroyed by it."

The rule of force, moreover, is preserved by a cunning method of deadening men's consciences, by separating the execution of orders from the giving of them. One set of men, "sitting quietly in their study," orders murder

and cruelty; another set obeys the orders and is convinced that its superiors alone bear the responsibility for them. The state relieves those who are responsible for actions from the necessity of performing them, and takes away all responsibility from those who do what they are told, so that those who give the order are led to act by the ease with which they can have their orders carried out, and those who execute them do not hesitate, because they can shelter behind the conscience of others. If those who gave the orders had to hang men, to conduct wars themselves, or if those who do these things had themselves to shoulder the responsibility for them, not a thousandth part of them would be done. Yet conscience is one of the greatest of human powers: "Man can go on doing what he considers wrong, but he cannot stop thinking of wrong as wrong." If man is strong enough, it is not even possible to force him "by any peril, by any external threat . . . to act against his conscience"; this can be achieved with certainty only by confusing and bewildering him. Thus, however, it is within the power of the individual, even, to change these conditions by awakening men's consciences, without great resources and without using force.

The criticism of the psychological causes of social failure, therefore, already opens the way towards a possible positive achievement and shows that it is in the spiritual sphere that we can find the necessary liberating power. Tolstoy discovers it in particular in the pure Christianity with which he confronts our world so as to show its falseness. It is by thus opposing these two standards that he both sees our world so clearly and is able, also, to destroy the layers of convention which usually hide the real meaning of Christianity, so that he succeeds in freeing the rational teaching of Christianity from its distortions.

He repeats the most important achievement of the

Reformation, by going back to the Bible, by trying to make it clear and understandable and to destroy all falsifications of it. He shows that the Christian faith is not merely a belief in an external God, by emphasizing the human teaching which is behind the theological dogma. "The teaching of Christ is different from former doctrines, because it does not lead men by outward prescriptions, but by the inner recognition of man's own possibilities of achieving divine perfection . . . Christianity says, live in harmony with your own nature. . . . The kingdom of God is within you." At last, Christianity is seen again as a simple and understandable way of living, clearly and adequately answering man's demands to know who he is, what he has to do and how he has to live—the only questions which are of real importance.

Tolstoy also sees quite clearly the futility of the frequent attempts of the time to preserve the importance of the figure of Christ by interpreting it according to a philosophy of history. He recognizes that it is nonsensical to claim that all the founders of religion "have preached their teaching, and their followers accepted it, not because they loved truth . . . but because the political, social, and above all the economic conditions . . . were favourable to their appearance and the spreading of their teaching." He realizes that the interpretation of history, which sees events in retrospect as following blind laws of necessity, is as misleading as a belief in progress, because it leaves all that the individual, and the individual alone, should and can achieve, to the impersonal "law of development." Belief in such theories must inevitably lead to the destruction of the valuable core of any teaching.

Tolstoy's chief merit, however, lies in his attempt to find a way of living a Christian life in the world as it is.

For it is clear, quite apart from all questions of the absolute rightness of Christianity or of the evidence of miracles and myths, that if the most important Christian command, that we must love mankind, were generally obeyed, it would be enough in itself to free and redeem mankind. The most perfect social Utopias would be easy of accomplishment if men were willing to help one another and if they were guided by a living sense of community, strong enough to overcome their selfishness. The difficulty, however, lies in the fact that the fulfilment of this command is always seen as a remote and impracticable objective and never as an immediate necessity; nobody wants to begin to take this command seriously. Yet Tolstoy has already shown that no individual lacks the power to achieve something and that every single person must himself make a start, and he goes on to draw it more and more clearly.

Nobody is free from the duty of beginning without considering what others are doing. "Not before the first, second, third, hundredth bee opens its wings freely and flies, will the swarm fly. . . . Not before every single man makes the Christian way of life his own and begins to live accordingly, will the contradictions of human life be solved and a new way of human life created." We cannot wait for someone else to start living this life, so that we see what are the results. "Certainly, it would be easier if the nations could move from one hotel to another and a better one, but it is a pity that then there would be nobody to prepare the new quarters." To ask for knowledge of the new way of life before it has been made real would be to demand from an explorer a description of the country he is setting out to explore.

Tolstoy shows, moreover, that the most important Christian commands are set forth in a way which makes

it possible for everybody to fulfil them to some extent, even if he is not yet able to attain the ideal. The ideal is love of all men, but what is possible for everybody is not to be angry with men and not to hurt them; the ideal is to have complete trust and to live entirely in the present, without wanting security for the future, but what is possible is not to take an oath so as to bind oneself in the future; the ideal is non-resistance, but what is possible is to endure wrongs; the ideal is to love one's enemies, what is possible is not to hate other nations and not to fight against them. Even the ecstatic feelings, implicit in the Christian commands—not neighbourly love, but the love of enemies, the joy over the return of the prodigal son, of the repentant sinner—even this ecstasy makes it easier to obey these commands, for it is easier to act out of strong feelings than out of equanimity or indifference. He who wants to swim across a swiftly flowing river will not swim directly towards his goal on the other bank, but against the current.

His exposition has such force, because Tolstoy takes as the central doctrine of Christianity the command: "Resist not evil." He emphasizes again and again that the rejection of the use of force is as much a part of the Christian teaching as "the equality of the radii to the circle"; "how could any moral teaching co-exist with allowing a man to kill his fellow for any purpose whatsoever?" No other command of Christ has been as much neglected, misinterpreted and belittled as this, for it seems impossible to meet force by anything but force, and even the effectiveness of ideas which Tolstoy emphasizes seems to need the support of force. Yet it is in this point that the deepest wisdom of Christianity is to be found, without which all other beliefs remain incomplete. For this command when followed out solves a problem whose abstract

solution has defeated the greatest endeavours of all philosophers—it limits the sphere of human freedom.

Man is not free in the world of events, for all his actions are dependent there upon a multitude of incomprehensible external compulsions, if only because death can cut short any of our actions. Death, regardless of our intentions, can put an end to all our endeavours. Tolstoy sees that the use of force marks the point where futile resistance against this fate begins—futile, because it is a recognition that the world of external events is the only world—while the renunciation of force leads to an awareness of those values and experiences within man which have a meaning and a purpose in spite of death. If men "spent but a hundredth of the energy which now they spend on outward activities, on those activities in which they are really free, on the acceptance and profession of truth," the world would be far more quickly and fundamentally transformed.

Tolstoy never tires of collecting proofs that the power of ideas is greater than that of force. "No nation, which had subjugated another, but which was at a lower level of development . . . ever introduced its social order by force, but always adopted the way of life of the subjugated people." Men who appeal to force behave like those "who want to set a steam engine in motion by turning its wheels with their hands, forgetting that its real motive force lies in the expansion of steam." If we do not even try to bring about results by force, by war, by violent revolution, but concentrate immediately upon spiritual activity, we shall have quite different possibilities of success. This is best seen in our personal lives, for if we met every threat of enmity, not by the reserve, the distrust and the hatred which inevitably increase enmity, but by the love which stops it from developing, most evils would be pre-

vented. "Ninety nine hundredths of the evil in the worl
. . . is there because men give themselves the right t
anticipate an evil which may possibly occur." Non-resis
ance, therefore, leads in practice to the fulfilment of th
other commands, of love for one's neighbour and fo
one's enemies, of trust in the future. It is here that th
overflow of feelings, which characterizes all the Christia
commands, is most clearly justified, for the fulfilment o
all the Christian aims is made possible by the emphas
on what seems an impossible command.

Unfortunately, however, Tolstoy makes a fundament
mistake in his interpretation of this command, so tha
he fails to give that meaning to it that would enable u
to make real all these assertions which are correct i
theory. He limits it to the mere renunciation of violenc
for he corrects Christ and demands: "Resist not evil b
violence." He finds in this doctrine, it is true, an efficien
political weapon, but half of the meaning is lost; not t
resist with violence is only half of the command whic
tells us not to resist at all. The possession of positive aim
is what is truly important, for mere opposition will no
triumph unless it is itself founded on positive ideals. It
most essential, therefore, that this command should lea
man away from mere negation. He should not concer
himself with opposing anything at all, neither with o
without violence, but should rather live his life withou
paying any attention to evil. If the command is narrowe
down to mean only violent resistance, then passive resis
ance can become a dangerous obsession; it does, in fac
take up most of Tolstoy's attention. He sees a refusal t
take part in war, for instance, as both good and necessary
but if, in times of peace, we prepare ourselves only fo
this refusal, we shall not prevent war, because we pre
suppose its inevitability. Yet a genuine and positiv

Christianity, which is infinitely wider than such a limited belief, will either make war impossible or, if it comes, make the refusal to take part in it a matter of course.

Tolstoy is also right in demanding that "we must not serve the government and strengthen its power, if we believe that this power is harmful, nor enjoy the privileges of a capitalist system if we disapprove of it, nor honour any rituals if we think that they are pernicious superstitions, nor take part in courts of justice if we think they are founded in lies, nor serve as soldiers, nor take oaths, nor tell any kind of lies, nor do mean actions." Nevertheless, it is not true that if these commands were obeyed, "a change which would bring about the liberation of mankind and the establishment of truth would be accomplished immediately, a change which we dare not dream of for centuries to come," for this is not sufficient. If we do nothing but oppose the existing institutions without violence, we may perhaps weaken them, but this is of no use unless we have something positive to put in their place.

Tolstoy himself has a positive aim to put beside his passive resistance, but it is in this aim that his mistake becomes obvious. He calls for a return to a life which is close to nature, simple, not concerned with technical achievement, a life of farm work and of manual labour. But the desire for such a way of life shows that to envisage a really positive aim is beyond him, for it rests, just as much as those systems which he opposes, on the belief in dogmatical laws. Such an existence denies the special qualities and talents of man; it denies all meaning and importance to the previous development of mankind, and it asks every individual, without regard for his special circumstances or qualities, to live in the same prescribed way, which it will alone sanction. Tolstoy thus

concerns himself with setting out an external way of life, a course which usually he rightly opposes, and the consequences must be fundamentally wrong.

The outward conduct of life is not so all-important and does not in itself guarantee a moral life, for behaviour which appears virtuous may be founded upon lies and be worse, therefore, than obviously bad behaviour. If nothing but the rejection of the material achievements of the modern world is emphasized, the moral impulse behind the attempt may easily be weakened, for as technical and practical development cannot be halted artificially, the endeavour is well-nigh hopeless. The man who makes it is bound to be discouraged, and the whole moral idea endangered because of failure in one inessential detail. But even if he is not discouraged, he will hinder his moral development. In an appropriate occupation a man can find an opportunity of developing his personality and of transforming and using those natural gifts which could otherwise be most dangerous. But before he is mature, he will not know how to make use of the time left to him by a "natural life," even though he tries to live like a saint, which is Tolstoy's real aim. Deprived of all help from outside, he will be in danger of sinking into sloth, of being submerged in ceremonies and thus of stunting his growth.

Tolstoy is unable, outside his own artistic works, to escape that overestimation of the intellect which is a legacy of the Renaissance. He is able to achieve only what lies within the power of the intellect and not what is fundamental, what lies within the power of the feelings, the imponderable human qualities. This is very clearly shown by one of his greatest achievements—his interpretation of the Gospels. So far as he is concerned with the teaching, the interpretation is excellent; he is often able

to make the most obscure passages quite clear, and to distinguish convincingly between the original contents and later distortions. But the beauty and splendour of the Gospels are lost; he is unable to reproduce their intensity and ecstasy of feeling, in spite of his intellectual recognition of their importance.

Eventually, he relapses into purely dogmatic teaching. He makes use here of the conception of "God" which he usually denies, but this only throws his failure into relief, for he uses it as an abstract concept, as equivalent to "the good" or "the spirit," without being able to connect it either with the feelings or with our experience. But the significance of the conception of God lies in a recognition of it as something incomprehensible and holy; this, it is true, does not provide an intellectual explanation, but it serves to give man a sense of his connection with the whole of the incomprehensible universe, and justifies that feeling of immense responsibility which finds its expression in morality. Yet Tolstoy has no understanding of this; his morality is purely intellectual and does not spring from any more adequate knowledge of reality. Holiness, Providence, Grace—all these are so many meaningless words for him; he wants to analyze everything by reason.

His chief error lies in the purpose of his interpretation, for he introduces this abstract and empty conception of God in order to replace Christ, with the intention of making the Christian teaching clearer by excluding the life of Christ from the Gospels. Not only does he exclude such supernatural elements as miracles and the resurrection, but even the personal development and experiences of Christ; His struggle with Himself on behalf of men, His loneliness, His attitude towards His family, His fears and His death on the cross—the most important element

of the Gospels is lost. But we need only think of Dostoevsky's interpretation of the temptation in the desert, of the wedding at Cana and of the crucifixion and death of Christ to see that such an interpretation as Tolstoy's destroys the real depth of Christianity.

Tolstoy's attacks upon certain aspects of Christianity are as vigorous as those of Nietzsche. When they enable him to remove the perversions of the original doctrine, this energy is valuable, but unfortunately he attacks almost all the dogmas without discriminating between them, so that frequently he only betrays his own misunderstanding of them. His standards of criticism are purely scientific, and he finds it very easy, therefore, to attack the accounts of the creation, of miracles, of the resurrection of Christ, and the institution of the Holy Communion. But in making these attacks he misses the point, for he is never aware that symbols and experiences can have a real meaning for man, even though it is one which cannot be grasped by the intellect alone. Nietzsche, from his own point of view, is right in his attacks on the mystical elements in Christianity, because he wants to destroy it, but Tolstoy is wrong, because he wants to renew and to save it. If we are to rely upon the intellect alone, Christianity is quite superfluous, but if we hold fast to Christianity, we cannot restrict man within his intellectual faculties.

Examples, moreover, are quite indispensable in the teaching of morality. If moral laws are expressed by mere moral prescriptions, man seems to be in a position to judge his neighbour. But no man can fully understand another, nor know the forces at work which find expression in his actions, so that to judge in this way, by comparing another's actions with the abstract moral prescription, is a grave error. What must be preserved is the true

basis of morality—the feelings in which the knowledge of good and evil is rooted. Yet this moral freedom can only be reconciled with a clear presentation of the moral law if it is expressed through a human example, for thus every law is connected with an experience and gains its significance from the feelings which it calls forth, and from its relation to our personal lives. The relevance of the example is clear to everybody who finds himself in a similar situation, but we are prevented from judging others by our inability fully to understand from outside the relevance of the example to the situation of another individual. To ask for literal obedience to definite laws would be very simple, but what really matters is the spirit in which they are obeyed, and how this obedience is related to one's personal life, to one's motives and to one's intentions. An example alone can give the fullest expression to such moral teaching.

Tolstoy, because of these errors, goes more and more astray, and gradually his writings take on the character of these harsh judgments which he attacks. As soon as he formulates his dogma, he becomes a fanatic, bitterly rejecting, as lying and superfluous, all science, art and philosophy. It is certainly true that when bad examples come from the educated classes they are especially dangerous, for the simple man cannot imagine that teachings are wrong when they are followed by kings and ministers, by professors and bishops, when they are proclaimed as right from all pulpits and all platforms. Nevertheless, there is an art which is fruitful and necessary, a science and a philosophy which deserve support. Life is not so simple that a few dogmatic doctrines are sufficient; it is necessary to explore it, to shape it and to express it ever anew.

The "soft inner voice" of conscience is not necessarily

drowned by such endeavours; they may also serve to develop it. Even a sincere and passionate error can be more fruitful than indifference. A discriminating criticism of such endeavours would be more important, therefore, than such a blind struggle against them. But as the only choices which Tolstoy recognizes are intellectual ones, he cannot imagine that false ideals may attract even sincere men of good will. He does not know or does not want to know how deeply the cult of heroism and everything that follows from it are rooted in human nature; he pays no attention to the immense obstacles to his leading a moral life which every man finds within himself. He never recognizes an error as excusable nor an endeavour as misdirected; all are lies and crimes, and anybody who defends the state, for instance, or is not a Christian in the same way as he himself, is in his eyes a malicious liar and scoundrel. He is certainly right once more in his attack on that attitude towards the state which is so common at present, the attitude which usually finds expression in such words: "As a man I pity him, but as a guard (or a judge, or a general, or a governor, or a prince, or a soldier) I must kill or punish him." He is right when he exclaims: "As if men could be put into any positions, or could recognize any positions, which could take away those duties which are imposed upon each of us as men!" But man can be driven into this conflict even by his sincerity. As we can very clearly see in Tolstoy's own life, to be sincere alone does not prevent man from erring.

We have already emphasized how important for our investigation is the case of Tolstoy, because his turning towards Christianity is achieved only by overcoming the strongest contrary impulses. It is, in the best sense of the word, exemplary, because of the thoroughness with which

he follows his convictions, for which he risks everything he has achieved, and because of the courage with which he enters into the struggle against state and Church. It is not through any wavering on his part that the state tolerated him, even after his excommunication, for he tried several times to provoke the authorities. But gradually, the errors of his teaching become visible also in his life.

He was first impelled towards changing his way of life by an attempt to dispense charity to the poor in Moscow, when he saw that what really matters is not money but outlook and faith. He thought it arrogant to want to help them, because his own beliefs were far more indefinite and uncertain than those of the poor. But he was so overcome that, faced with such misery, he was unable even to distribute a few roubles. His consciousness of inferiority, correct in itself, became a settled conviction which left no room for natural feeling. Later, he asked his wife to give up their wealth so completely that she was forced to oppose him for the sake of their children, and therefore he did not even succeed in doing away with the great luxury in his own house. He wanted to leave his family, but was unable to do so, because he remembered his own dogmas, the doctrines of non-resistance and of the sacredness of marriage, and his wife even had a child at the time of their greatest estrangement. Eventually he spoiled the lives of his wife and children, whom he had no wish to hurt, and the originally happy marriage, although remaining, by his standards, pure, was ruined by the pettiest and most torturing quarrels.

Despite his sincerity, therefore, his voluntary poverty was a fraud, because although he renounced his wealth and did not want to use it, he went on living in a splendid house, surrounded by the greatest luxury. His voluntary poverty caused him no privations and helped nobody; it

showed itself as the whim of a spoiled nobleman. His attempt to employ his time in manual work was even more dangerously fruitless, and it is a sad and almost a ridiculous sight to watch Tolstoy neglecting that unique talent with which he could so signally have served mankind, so that he can cut wood, clean his room or learn carpentry—all of which could be better done by someone else. And this renunciation, too, despite the honesty of his intentions, was a fraud, for his talent was so strong that it could not be suppressed and he continued to write in secret. His principles only succeeded in making him ashamed of it. He despised the one thing which was essential and emphasized what was completely unimportant. This partial suppression of what was his real work, however, was sufficient to do him a great deal of harm, and in those diaries which witness so movingly to his painful struggle for moral perfection, we see more and more clearly that boredom which comes from trying to live by rigid and external rules of conduct.

The use of what was his real talent, from which he could never really escape, should have shown Tolstoy an altogether different and more trustworthy road towards his goal of perfection. If he had left his family immediately after his change of heart, the separation would have been much easier than it was after going on living together had filled them with a morbid bitterness; his wife might even have had some understanding of the need for this separation if it had been forced upon her for the sake of his work, which she admired. At least the possibility of a reconciliation between them would have remained. Devotion to his writing would have solved the problem of voluntary poverty, too, for it is easy for an artist to live a simple life, if he deliberately turns away from the path which his admirers expect him to follow.

It would have been easy, too, to establish the right kind of community with his fellow human beings, which he so much desired. Tolstoy was not fundamentally a social man and was most concerned with his own happiness, so that his emphasis upon social life cost him a constant struggle with himself. Yet it is through his talent that an unsocial artist can most naturally join himself with the community, because he is not forced, against his nature, to try to make direct contact with others; rather does the exercise, often in solitude, of his gifts lead him to the place in society where he belongs. It is true that to do this Tolstoy would have had to accept some services from others, which was what he tried to avoid, but he would have done infinitely more for mankind, and he would probably have achieved that perfection in his work and life which was denied to him.

Tolstoy never accepted the place in life which fate seemed to have intended for him. He was unwilling to progress slowly and indirectly, and because he thought that he had certain knowledge of the nature of perfection, he tried to reach it in one step. It was for this reason that he struggled for his ideal of holiness. No man, however, can force his way to perfection and holiness. If we have some definite aim in view, we may in the struggle to attain it reach a certain perfection, but if we think only of perfection itself, we forget that we can reach any goal we set ourselves only by individual actions. We have to do everything as well as possible; to struggle to be perfect is to think first of ourselves, and leads us to pride and vanity. Whether or not we can reach our ultimate objective remains a gift of grace. Tolstoy was led so far astray that eventually he even needed the torturing conflict with his family to convince himself, by his conviction of martyrdom, of his own dignity. The prophet of the ful-

filment of life longed more and more for a tragic catastrophe to put an end to his inner emptiness, and as he had not yet overcome his fear of death, we can judge from this how great is his despair.

But Tolstoy's dogmas were refuted even more thoroughly by his life. He himself distrusted his natural instincts and impulses and tried to rule his life entirely by his intellect, but it was because his natural gifts were stronger than his intellect that, in his life, he not only showed his mistakes, but also partly corrected them. His artistic abilities—these despised and rejected talents—took him one step further. They not only show us, but also showed Tolstoy himself, his real, though unexpressed, motives, and made him more and more aware of the conditions in which his art could develop.

Genuine talent is the most reliable measure of complete sincerity, because it cannot be forced into the service of foreign ideas or intentions without deteriorating. So long as Tolstoy's struggle to lead a Christian and moral life came naturally to him, he was able, easily and adequately, to express it in a form in which Christian and moral teaching and his literary gifts combined naturally to make a coherent artistic achievement. Yet soon his works showed signs of feebleness, of being written to support a certain idea. His early folk-stories are magnificent, the later ones artificial, and the novel *Resurrection* is a failure. Living art cannot come into being to support a fixed and decided theory, but only through the efforts of an artist to penetrate farther into an unknown field.

It is very significant, therefore, that it is the concern with holiness which eventually led Tolstoy to produce, in *Father Sergius*, a story which is both very revealing and of great value. Sergius rejects the army and court-life which the young Tolstoy had lived; he rejects the mo-

nastic life which Tolstoy thought was wrong, and finally he becomes a hermit and seeks to live the life of a saint. His feeling of futility and emptiness, however, grows more and more intolerable, in spite of the veneration in which he is held, and therefore he changes his way of life once more, mingles with simple folk and serves them by doing manual work. We may judge from this that Tolstoy felt the frustration of his true nature and wanted to escape from it, but he did not yet fully understand what he had written. He did not see that his own manual work did not correspond to that of Sergius, but rather to the hermit's life which Sergius is forced to reject because it is unnatural for him, and that it is not possible to lay down dogmatically what is man's task, for it must be decided for him by the circumstances in which he finds himself and by what talents he possesses. But Tolstoy certainly felt very deeply that something was lacking in his life and, at bottom, he rejected the goal of holiness as pride and vanity, despite the flatteries of the admirers who came to visit him from all over the world.

As he did not see clearly where this pointed, it was another aspect which he stressed. What makes Sergius finally reach his decision is his defeat by the sensuality, against which he has continually struggled, so that it is through sin that he finds repentance. Yet the belief in sin as the path to redemption, which Tolstoy bases on this experience and which is frequently regarded as the real merit of Russian philosophy, is obviously an aberration. The more abandoned the sinner, of course, the more impressive is his reformation by repentance, but this hardly justifies the proclamation of sin itself as an aim. Every human being is inevitably responsible for so much sin, and sees so much suffering in which he is in some way involved, that if this is not sufficient to awaken his

feelings, if he still needs to sin more deeply before he can feel guilty, then this new sin will rather overwhelm than purify him. Here, too, we have to accept what comes to us. To strive for the opposite of the end we wish to achieve is a counsel of despair.

This attempt to project his struggles into an artistic form did not yet, therefore, help Tolstoy, and he was forced to write of his own problems again, and this time directly. In the play *The Light Shineth in Darkness* it is the struggle to achieve holiness which is again the main subject, but this time it is presented as it appeared in his own life; he shows his conflict with his wife, his false poverty, his passive resistance. It is clear that he really knew, by now, the lie into which he had been forced and even recognized that he had failed because he had made too many dogmatic demands on himself. "Because I wanted to do something which was beyond my strength, I found myself in this stupid and meaningless and degrading situation. I want to live and to work simply at some simple task, but in these surroundings, with porters and servants, the result is bound to be comic." But even this projection of the problems did not help him to overcome them; rather did it show how much he needed his conflict with his family, so that he could pity himself and so re-establish his own idea of his dignity. The character who represents him in the play is murdered by a fanatical woman; as before he had called in sin to provide an artificial solution, so now he summons death—the martyr's death which alone can make him appear holy and which mercifully hides the lack of any real solution of the problems. The last act is incomplete; not knowing the right solution, he could not face the terror of death.

In spite of his inability to solve the problems which faced him, however, the clearer realization of what these

problems were, a realization which Tolstoy owed to these works, was of the greatest importance for him. The impulse which moved him most strongly and which could not be weakened was always the desire to find out the truth. Hardly any other man has lived his life so sincerely and with so little concealment; it is only because he himself allowed us to see his most secret deeds and thoughts, throwing his house open to the world and making available to everyone his diaries and the artistic works which he rejected, that we are able to recognize his errors. But the confusion of his thought endangered his honesty, or that part of it at least which was concerned with himself, and it was only through those books which he despised and rejected that it was saved.

When he felt his death approaching, not the artificial death of a martyr, but a simple and a natural death; when he no longer had time to speculate and to hesitate, then at last his feelings took control of him and forced him to see the error of his life. Thanks to his sincerity, which had been saved by his talent, his true greatness showed itself. So freed was he from fear that he did not shrink from confessing his error, frankly and publicly, at the last moment. Faced with death, he had the strength to destroy the structure he had so carefully built up and to reject, without regard for himself or for his fame, everything for which he had been mistakenly striving. He did now all those things he had been suppressing for many years; he cared no longer for his own perfection, for his ideal of holiness, but secretly left his home. Such an action leaves us in no doubt that he recognized the falseness of his dogmatic teaching, and that he was willing to reject his false doctrines without sparing himself.

Thus, at the end, he did what he himself had rightly called "the most beautiful and greatest deed in this life"

—he died in complete consciousness of what was happening to him, without fear at last, at rest with himself and contented. For us, however, his last journey through the wastes of snow and his death in a wretched station hall are his crowning glory. Here in truth he sacrificed himself for mankind by deliberately putting an end, at any cost to himself, to his way of living and the teaching which it expressed. He achieved that greatness for which he had previously struggled in vain.

But the moment of death left him time only for recantation; it was too late to say what has to be done. That concentration of all attention upon man, which was, it seemed, about to be achieved, was again frustrated. But Tolstoy was only the first to pronounce the "Russian word" so that it could be understood in Europe; Russia itself was not yet exhausted. He cleared the way for the understanding by Europe of a greater man, of Dostoevsky. It is true that Dostoevsky's life and work were already over when Tolstoy began to proclaim the necessity of a purified Christianity, but it is because of

CHAPTER X

DOSTOEVSKY: THE RETURN TO MAN

DOSTOEVSKY'S work is often considered as being purely negative and destructive, as an embodiment of chaos. Yet its real importance lies, on the contrary, not in the destructive power which he applies to the existing world, but in his constructive search for a positive ideal. Even the chaos which he represents in his works has a positive meaning. It is not an artificial creation, but the clear recognition of where man has been brought by his loss of faith and by his failure to direct his attention towards human values and human needs; as such, it is the inevitable consequence of the beliefs and ideals of the 19th century. By representing all these trends of thought in his works, and following them to their logical conclusions, he shows the futility and emptiness to which they must finally lead. He is the only man to understand the true character of this century. Such a clear recognition of things as they are, however, is by no means negative; it is the most important prerequisite for a new start, and it is this penetrating knowledge which enables Dostoevsky to show that it is possible to create a new world.

His knowledge of this age and his projection of the forces at work in it into his books are almost complete; his novels form the great epic of the 19th century. There is scarcely an important trend of thought, scarcely an important figure, which we do not find embodied or interpreted there, and most of the ideas and endeavours

which are still important for us can be better understood with his help.

The young Dostoevsky is concerned with the Romantic, the aimless dreamer who, out of touch with life, longs for the ideal without being able to bring it into being. In his indulgence in aimless feelings, in his love of decadence and destruction, Dostoevsky finds a "limitless baseness" which is a destructive force, robbing Romanticism of its value. Painful experiences force Dostoevsky to abandon his dreams and to face reality, and this turn in his life marks the beginning of his struggle against heroism, of his attacks upon Napoleon and his study of crime, which is most clearly and vividly expressed in *Crime and Punishment*. Later he even goes on to examine the idea of the superman. Many years before Nietzsche, Kirillov in *The Possessed* expresses this ideal almost in Zarathustra's words, and demonstrates the absurd futility to which it leads. But before that, the narrator of the *Notes from Underground* had been driven to despair by his belief in the philosophy of history and in progress. The influence of such a faith is more and more clearly understood, until it is finally refuted by Ivan Karamazov. Dostoevsky was also greatly concerned, from the very beginning, with social conditions. It was for taking part in the struggle for the liberation of the serfs that he was condemned to penal servitude in Siberia, and even if he did not know, or did not want to know of the rise of scientific Marxist socialism, this movement does not invalidate his rejection of materialism in all its forms.

So clear is his insight that it frequently seems to lead him to correct prophecy. Seventeen years before Nietzsche's insanity, Kirillov in *The Possessed* shows the fate to which man is driven by such beliefs, and

Tolstoy's flight from his home, thirty eight years after the book was written, is paralleled, amazingly and revealingly, by that of Stepan Trofimovitch. The representation of the nihilist conspiracy in this novel, too, is apposite in that it helps us to understand many events which took place in Russia and Germany between the two wars. The conflict between father and son in *A Raw Youth*, moreover, can be better understood if we think of the conflict between the generations which grew up before and after the first world war.

The first great attack of Dostoevsky is directed against the ideal of heroism. He is not concerned with those men who, by their nature or by force of external circumstances, seem bound to become heroes. A genuine ideal has to be valid for all men and in all circumstances and it must be possible to aim at it consciously; he examines, therefore, what effects this ideal must have in the life of an intelligent and ambitious person who is not marked out by fate to be a hero. Raskolnikov is in a similar position to Napoleon, in that though he is a poor student his ambition is boundless, but he lacks Napoleon's brutal strength and the support which he gained from a revolutionary situation. He therefore must try, consciously and deliberately, to accomplish heroic deeds. By stripping the ideal of heroism of those circumstances which usually make it appear inevitable, however, Dostoevsky sees at once what it really is—that the constant underlying principle of Napoleon's deeds is a belief in the rightness of murder. "The real master . . . storms Toulon, orders a massacre in Paris, forgets an army in Egypt, wastes half a million men in the Moscow expedition and gets off with a jest at Vilna." [1] That is not

[1] The Novels of Dostoevsky, transl. by Constance Garnett, Vol. 4, Crime and Punishment, p. 250.

only true of Napoleon: "All legislators and leaders of men, such as Lycurgus, Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon, and so on, were all without exception criminals . . . and they did not stop short of bloodshed either, if that bloodshed . . . were of use to their cause. It's remarkable, in fact, that the majority, indeed, of these benefactors and leaders of humanity were guilty of terrible carnage." [2] Nor have men questioned the rightness of this: "Altars are set up to him after his death, and so all is permitted. . . . The law is not for them." [3]

The principles upon which heroism is based are thus presented to us clearly and unambiguously. If we accept heroism, we must also accept the belief that it is right to kill men and that the fear of bloodshed is mere prejudice. "All is permitted," "laws do not exist." [4] As all the great heroes were in some respect criminals, "there is only one thing, one thing needful: one has only to dare!" [5] Great deeds and the defeat of one's adversaries are the only achievements which really count. To approve of a simple duel is to approve of killing, and the growth of armies vastly extends the scope of this approval, so that innumerable people are sacrificed to the hero. Thus, however, heroism is deprived of its value. Originally a way of ennobling man's animal instincts by subordinating them to human rules, it must now lead to a constant increase in violence in which these ideal demands cannot be satisfied. Everyone who strives for the good in this way has soon to decide whether he wants to remain a hero and therefore to kill and so to renounce his ideal, or to renounce heroism for the sake of the good. There is no middle way.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 237.
[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 250 and 236.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 250.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 377.

Dostoevsky tests this conclusion by the sole objection which still seems possible. Killing may not be justified by all actions, but only by those which are useful to mankind and which could not be achieved without it, and then only if the death of a few is more than amply compensated for by the benefits which are brought to mankind. "If the discoveries of Kepler and Newton could not have been made known except by sacrificing the lives of one, a dozen, a hundred, or more men, Newton would have had the right, would indeed have been in duty bound . . . to eliminate the dozen or the hundred men for the sake of making his discoveries known to the whole of humanity. But it does not follow from that that Newton had a right to murder people right and left and to steal every day in the market." [6] Heroism, therefore, ought not to be an end in itself, but the means to another end. It is this argument which finally drives Raskolnikov to murder; he wants to kill an old woman, a usurer, in order to help many people. "On one side we have a . . . horrid old woman, not simply useless, but doing actual mischief. . . . On the other side, fresh young lives thrown away for want of help and by thousands, on every side! A hundred thousand good deeds could be done . . . dozens of families saved from destitution, from ruin, from vice . . . and all with her money. Kill her, take her money and with the help of it devote oneself to the service of humanity and the good of all . . . would not one tiny crime be wiped out by thousands of good deeds?. . . One death, and a hundred lives in exchange—it's simple arithmetic!" [7]

But it soon becomes clear that the ideal of heroism cannot be maintained even if it is presented in this form.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 237.
[7] *Op. cit.*, pp. 60–61.

Courage, resolution, willingness to make sacrifices, all these can be important in the achieving of ideal aims, but we must not call them, as they are so often called today, heroism. The ideal of heroism implies the killing of one's fellow beings, and as soon as this is done, the good which it promises is not attained, for human life cannot be reduced to a simple figure in an arithmetical calculation. The calculations of human intelligence are clearly insufficient to be entrusted with the power of life and death, for here they touch something which they cannot understand. No aim, not even the most sublime, can justify a conscious acceptance of murder. Heroism can be accepted at best as an unconscious expression, as an instinctive reaction, or as an external compulsion; not even as a means can it be part of an ideal. Eventually, Raskolnikov wishes fervently to have murdered "without casuistry," [8] and his seemingly idealistic calculations increase our abhorrence of his deed, for the belief in the rightness of killing only awakens and excuses his darkest and most deeply concealed instincts. It is, so far at least as his feelings are concerned, only a way of justifying to his conscience his lust of destruction.

It is here that Dostoevsky's attack on the beliefs of the age penetrates to a deeper level. The overestimation of the intellect, which is the particular support of heroism and misdirected individualism, is throughout the 19th century one of the chief legacies of the Renaissance. But Dostoevsky shows with the same power of persuasion that we must reject this deeper motive too.

The intellect, isolated from man's other faculties, is only able to recognize what can be measured and what can be explained by logic. It presents as an aim to the individual, therefore, his personal advantage, for every-

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 378.

thing else transcends the sphere of the pure intellect. The narrator of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* expresses these conclusions in their most extreme form. "I want peace; yes, I'd sell the whole world for a farthing, straight off, so long as I was left in peace. Is the world to go to pieces, or am I to go without my tea? I say that the world may go to pieces so far as I am concerned so long as I always get my tea." [9] Yet at the same time, man must recognize by his intellect that he can do nothing towards the fulfilment of his wishes. Not only is he dependent on the fact that the world does not go to pieces, for if it does he will be unable to get his tea, but also, if he believes in the intellect alone, he cannot even hope to act according to his intentions, for his intellect shows him at the same time that all happenings, including all his own actions, are entirely determined by the laws of causality and thus by a necessity which is entirely independent of man. Through his intellect he only recognizes that man is not free, and every increase in this knowledge leads to a more exact and comprehensive recognition of the necessity which denies his freedom.

Moreover, to this contradiction—hardly bearable in itself—a psychological obstacle is added, for man cannot accept this complete lack of freedom, even if it is to his advantage. "Even if this were proved to him by natural science and mathematics, even then he would not become reasonable, but purposely do something perverse. . . . He will contrive destruction and chaos, will contrive sufferings of all sorts, only to gain his point." It is the assertion of the will with which Dostoevsky is concerned. "If you say that the mere possibility of calculating it all beforehand would stop it all, and reason would reassert itself, then man would purposely go mad in order

[9] The Novels, Vol. 10, p. 93.

to be rid of reason.' " [10] The intellect drives man into contradictions which he can neither solve nor endure.

This is also the reason why the superman cannot come into being. The intellectual dissociation of man from the rest of the world drives Kirillov to his conviction "that there is no God," [11] and he concludes: "If there is no god, then I am God." [12] He must come to this conclusion, because the intellect recognizes as valuable in man only that which can be measured externally, and allows man to see only the two possibilities "to be a hero or to grovel in the mud"; [13] Kirillov, therefore, could not bear to acknowledge that anything stands higher than he himself. But when, more consistently than Nietzsche, he seeks proof of his assertion, he recognizes that he can prove this knowledge only by a deed which breaks the chain of causality. "If God exists, all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. If not, it's all my will and I am bound to show self-will." [14] Only an absolutely free action is god-like, only such a deed can prove that man is God.

He regards conscious suicide for the sake of an idea as such a free action. Any other deed is determined by external circumstances which are partially outside man's knowledge and power, and which therefore depend upon the normal operation of the laws of causality. It is only conscious suicide for the sake of an idea which is beyond the laws of nature and depends upon nothing but the human will. Such a suicide, therefore, must be a proof of this idea and transform it into something real. Like Nietzsche, Kirillov believes that his deed will be the

[10] *Op. cit.*, p. 73.
[11] The Possessed, Everyman's Library, Vol. 2, p. 255.
[12] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 253.
[13] The Novels, Vol. 10, Notes from Underground, p. 93.
[14] The Possessed, Everyman, Vol. 2, p. 254.

most important turning-point in the history of mankind and will even bring about a physical transformation of man. "Then they will divide history into two parts: from the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God . . to the transformation of the earth, and of man physically." [15]

But the contradictions, to which every purely intellectual consideration must lead, become visible here too. Kirillov cannot altogether exclude belief: "I am bound to believe that I don't believe." [16] Nor can the effects of such a suicide be understood intellectually; the physical transformation of the human race by a single death would be a mystical event, and such an esoteric mysticism, cut off from the natural beliefs of mankind, is a worthy counterpart to Nietzsche's biological fantasies. The actual result of Kirillov's intentions, his suicide, is seen as an unequivocal refutation of his conclusions; far from triumphing, he recognizes at the end that all his ideas were wrong. At the very moment of the execution of his plan, he is overwhelmed by terror, but now he cannot go back; his insane conclusions have made it impossible for him to go on living, and so he must shoot himself. He is no longer acting freely, but against his will and in spite of a final rebellion against this compulsion, and his suicide changes nothing. The only result of this "free action" is that he himself is the victim of his thoughts. Over-emphasis of the intellect has driven him to insanity.

It is true that the intellect can pursue the advantage of man in a less individualistic way, as Marx had shown, by supporting socialism, but here too Dostoevsky's merciless attack follows it. If the aims of socialism are

[15] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 103–104.
[16] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 256.

expressed in purely intellectual terms, there is no room for the love of one's fellows which should inspire it, and nothing remains but a belief that all men should be fed, and have equal wealth. But so long as man cannot see beyond practical aims, he will be unable to adjust himself to the possibilities which exist, he will never even be able to share out fairly the bread which is available, nor to make use of the possible wealth and enjoy it in peace. We have had to stress repeatedly that, compared with the universe, man, whatever he may achieve, remains infinitesimally small, and that this contrast tends to drive him onwards to self-destruction. If socialism is to be realized on a purely intellectual basis in spite of this, there is only one way out of the dilemma; mankind must be subordinated to the absolute power of a few leaders who will see to the achievement of these practical aims.

The Nihilists in *The Possessed* are willing to pay any price to ensure that these leaders have absolute power. They intend to bring about wars so as to make mankind tired and obedient; they intend to kill all men of genius who awaken the irrational longings of man which might shake the power of the leaders; they are prepared to break any resistance by unlimited slaughter. Thus, however, we are once more brought up against the insoluble contradictions to which any purely intellectual activity must lead. Once more, human beings are made part of an arithmetical calculation for the sake of intellectual conclusions, so that, if the calculation requires it, they may be killed. Very quickly the consequences become visible. The leaders are intoxicated by their power; murder ruins all their good intentions and sets free their worst instincts. The phantom of the superman, of the "man-god," drives them mad, and they destroy every-

thing which makes life worth living, even before they have begun their organization of society.

This result seems conclusive, but Dostoevsky is not yet satisfied; he tries to test the highest possible forms of this purely intellectual and materialistic socialism. He tries to find out whether it is possible to exclude the destructive elements of Nihilism. The episode of the "Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov* presupposes a state where these plans are realized to a Utopian degree. The Church has educated a generation of leaders who are equal to their task, who know the power of the irrational desires of men, and who therefore rely, not upon force, but upon the overawing power of miracles to control them. Their possession of power is hidden behind the magic of the inexplicable, and the protesting conscience is silenced by actions which seem miraculous. They succeed without external compulsion in apportioning the goods of this life among the masses whom they have robbed of free will. It is the ideal realization of this aim, however, which shows most clearly how inhuman it is. This satisfied human herd, this perfect ant-hill is a terrible vision; no man would be able to bear such a complete slavery, even if it ensured his well-being. He would rather choose madness to being robbed, for the sake of material benefits, of everything which justifies the name of "man." Such a picture of a perfect materialistic socialist state ought to be convincing, because it transcends all practical possibilities and shows the ideal itself, but it only serves to make clear how unbearable such an ideal is. It is because of the very Utopian perfection that we are willing to accept the greatest sufferings, if only they help to prevent such a world coming into being.

Dostoevsky, moreover, does not make the mistake of

extending this attack on the over-emphasized intellect to the mind in general. He does not replace it, as so many other thinkers have done, by the ideal of a purely vegetative life, in which the intellect has no place. His attacks are more dangerous than those of any other thinker because he is neither one-sided nor superficial. He follows the advice of Nietzsche, striking at everything to find out what is unable to withstand his attacks and is destroyed, but in contrast to Nietzsche he never overlooks or misunderstands anything, thus giving us no opportunity to disagree with him and to find some easy consolation. His critique is so comprehensive that there is no escape. He sees the wrong and one-sided use of the intellect, but he also sees it as an essential part of the human mind and uses it as such, making as strong an attack on any illogicality or insufficient intellectual activity. No vague idea of beauty can make him bow down, and he uses the intellect to penetrate all romantic mists, to detect all lies and to destroy all delusions. He turns—and this is his second main attack—on all the half-truths which govern our lives, against everything which is lukewarm and half-hearted, barring the way to a deeper knowledge and a rebirth of our society.

This second attack is directed above all against the present society. What Marx and Tolstoy, starting with different assumptions, had revealed, is shown more deeply and thoroughly by Dostoevsky, because he starts from a consideration only of the human nature of man. Our society rests upon blind belief in concepts which have long ceased to have any relation to real life, and which are no longer scrutinized by the intellect, and it is these concepts which determine our ideas of right and wrong, of honour and dishonour, without any attention to the true nature of reality. But Dostoevsky does not

stop there, for he feels the great restlessness which announces the coming catastrophe. He knows, too, where this divorce between reality and our beliefs is bound to lead, and shows that this society is inevitably doomed.

Our society has lost the most fundamental of all human experiences, the feeling for time. We have lost the awareness that each of our short lives is a unique event which cannot be repeated, that we must exert all our strength so as not to miss our opportunities. Life, which is in fact far too short, seems to most of us to be obviously too long, for most of our labours and amusements are directed towards killing time, towards lulling ourselves into a state where we shall not feel its urgency. The fundamental impulse which stimulates us and keeps us alive is the hunt for money, and this is nothing but a symbol of death. When Raskolnikov murders for the sake of money, when Nastasya in *The Idiot* throws money into the fire and so exposes the true character of all her lovers, when Dmitri Karamazov is ruined by his intention of murdering his father for the sake of a ridiculous sum of money—then we see that man has been so far defeated by inanimate matter, by his own productions, that they will draw him on to destruction.

In consequence, everything that these people do drives them farther from the truth. They live by the side of the greatest misery without being able to feel compassion; they entrench themselves behind an official justice which no longer has anything to do with human rights, and however exciting and fascinating their way of life, it cannot hide this emptiness within them which destroys all vitality. The very remnants of a world which had in it more meaning—the feelings of honour, of shame, of tenderness and of conscience—are what ruins man. Strike

all these elements out of *The Brothers Karamazov*, and the most important causes of disaster are removed. The father's self-abasement, Katerina's hysteria, Dmitri's feeling of guilt, Grushenka's malice—all of them spring from motives which are fundamentally good, yet all of them contribute to the final catastrophe.

This society, therefore, can no longer bear to encounter a man who is really alive, so that in *The Idiot* it has to destroy Prince Myshkin. This world has crucified Christ and will always crucify Him. It is of little avail, even, that we know that such a crucifixion usually leads to the triumph of the crucified, for this world's lack of any clear awareness of the issues involved destroys even the possibility of faith. Everybody clings to external forms, to the letter of the law and so to the struggle for an abstract concept of God and for rigid dogmas, but nobody is able to believe any longer in such a literally interpreted faith, and therefore at this point even a Tolstoy must fail.

As a result chaos breaks loose. Sensuality, the fundamental force in life, no longer finds any spiritual counterpoise. So poor a reason and so dead a belief lack the strength to direct it into fruitful channels, to prevent it from sweeping away all restraints and dragging man down into the abyss.

We realize how indispensable is the work of the spirit when we see its failure turning the healthy vitality of the Karamazovs into "the strength of the Karamazov baseness," which forces man "to sink into debauchery, to stifle the soul with corruption." [17] The old Karamazov exclaims: "To my mind there are no ugly women. The very fact that she is a woman is half the battle," [18] and

[17] The Brothers Karamazov, Everyman, Vol. I, p. 270.
[18] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 137.

illness, idiocy and seduced piety stimulate his lechery. At seventy he still proclaims sarcastically: "I mean to go down in my sins to the end . . . for sin is sweet," [19] and his only wish is "to die in lust." To Dmitri, on the other hand, the words of Rakitin apply: "A man will fall in love with some beauty, with a woman's body, or even with a part of a woman's body . . . and he'll abandon his own children for her, sell his father and mother, and his country, Russia, too. If he's honest, he'll steal, if he's humane, he'll murder, if he's faithful, he'll deceive." [20] Father and son, moreover, become ferociously jealous of one another over Grushenka; the father wants his son imprisoned, so that he will be free to seduce her, and the son treads the father under foot and intends to murder him for the money he needs to buy her. It is only here that the worst consequences of the unfettered intellect become visible; the conclusion "Everything is lawful" [21] appears perfectly valid; Ivan's words "One reptile will devour the other" [22] seem to be quickly and terribly fulfilled. We cannot even deny these conclusions, man seems really "broad, too broad indeed." [23] If there is nothing left but lukewarm conventions and the extremes of cold intellect and unfettered lust such annihilation seems well deserved.

But the enormous negative force of Dostoevsky's criticism has not reached its limits even here. He is not content to point at these one-sided consequences of a wrong life, but opposes the greatest strength of the intellect and sensuality to those positive human values which still survive, to a pure and living morality and a true and unfalsified Christianity. His criticism is so

[19] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 174.
[20] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 76.
[21] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 270.
[22] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p, 142.
[23] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 106.

powerful because he does not quibble about details, but starts from what we all seem to accept as desirable, from a Utopian perfection of the world with a full realization of its meaning and appropriateness. Once more, no possibility of escape is left for us.

Ivan Karamazov states his complete belief unequivocally. "I accept God and am glad to, and what's more, I accept His wisdom, His purpose . . . I believe in the underlying order and the meaning of life; I believe in the eternal harmony in which they say we shall one day be blended." [24] But it is this absolute perfection which he refutes, and this refutation is entirely convincing. He simply shows that there are people who take a voluptuous pleasure in torturing children, and he shows it by mentioning examples of the unspeakable suffering of children which are, nevertheless, simple cases, such as can be found almost every day in the newspapers. Against this we must revolt because of our moral feelings, and we exclaim with Ivan: "If all must suffer to pay for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it? . . . I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in retribution, too; but there can be no such solidarity with children." [25] Thus, however, the moral world itself is destroyed, as is proved by the question which necessarily follows from it: "Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature . . . and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions?" [26]

[24] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 240.
[25] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 249.
[26] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 251.

We could logically answer "Yes" to this question, for immense happiness is bought for little misery, but for moral reasons we are bound to answer: "No." Thus, however, morality turns and destroys itself. Our moral indignation forces us into a rebellion against reality which must make all morality impossible.

The same happens with Christianity. The Grand Inquisitor confronts Jesus with the social Utopia whose inhumanity we have mentioned before, but he proves that we cannot reject it for reasons which are derived from Christianity. Man is unable to fulfil the Christian demands because he is too weak, and thus the Christian trust in his inner freedom has caused mankind the greatest unhappiness. Man can only become happy if he obeys the Grand Inquisitor, who makes allowances for his weaknesses. It is love for men, therefore, which makes inhuman demands. We can hardly but agree when the Grand Inquisitor says to Christ: "Man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! . . . By showing him so much respect, Thou didst, as it were, cease to feel for him, for Thou didst ask too much from him. . . . Respecting him less, Thou wouldst have asked less from him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter." [27] Thus man's love for men, too, turns against itself, and the last power on which we can rely is destroyed.

Dostoevsky is right, therefore, when he says: "There is no expression of atheism as strong in Europe, nor will there ever be one," and he is right when he defends himself against the accusation of sticking to the letter of the Christian creed. "The scoundrels laugh at me because of what they call my uneducated and backward belief in God. These idiots have not yet even dreamt of

[27] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 262.

such a denial of God as my 'Grand Inquisitor' and the preceding chapter. . . . These stupid creatures have not yet even dreamt of such a power of negation as I have been overwhelmed by." The depth of his denial, however, gives the greater value to whatever he can accept, for a belief which would enable him to overcome this negation and to build up from it a positive conception of the world must be unassailable. He says himself: "If I believe in God, I do not believe like a fool (a fanatic)! I believe in Christ and I profess this faith, not as a child, but as one whose hosannah has passed through the great purgatory of doubt," and in saying this he is indeed justified. It is thus that, after the destructive and negative forces which dominate the 19th century have been overcome, he can point the way to a new belief.

The positive element in Dostoevsky's work, however, is not merely a restatement of old ideals, but leads to the future; it is less clearly defined, therefore, than the negative elements. Dostoevsky himself stresses that his positive aim is not to be found in any single detail of *The Brothers Karamazov*, but that the doubts and questions which the representation of chaos evokes "are answered by the whole book," and this applies to all his work. But he makes this task easier for himself and enables us to understand and to follow his intention by creating two characters in whom the negative elements play no part and in whom, because of special circumstances, the positive elements are embodied more clearly than is possible in normal life.

The first of these figures, Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*, is a new presentation of the human character of Christ, which frees us from many misunderstandings and misinterpretations. It does so because there is no

outward similarity between the prince and the historical Jesus. The prince appears in our midst as a man who seems at first hardly different from the people we are used to, a child of our time, a member of our contemporary society, and thus we become aware of those traits in the character of Jesus which are of importance for us today, quite apart from the historical conditions of His life. The language of this book, too, is not different from that of Dostoevsky's other works; it is Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and not *The Idiot* which imitates the style of the New Testament. Nothing diverts our attention from what is really essential.

By the external impression which the prince makes we already gain an insight into one of the most surprising elements in the life of Christ. The prince appears at first only for a single day, and later for six months, among people who are entirely foreign to him and who want to resist his influence, and yet almost immediately he makes an ineffaceable impression on them. We feel at once, therefore, the infinite superiority of the ideal of the moral life over that of heroism, for heroism usually needs the support of a lifetime of endeavour and a long sequence of external changes, while the recognition of morality in all its depth and fullness is independent of time. To strive to achieve single deeds forces us to forgo many of the potentialities of our lives; it forces us to aim, at the expense of the present, at a distant and frequently unattainable moment of fulfilment, making the long periods of preparation seem unimportant. Morality, on the contrary, is a fact of our human nature; it is always present and can widen even a moment in which nothing seems to have happened into an experience of the completeness of the world. For its connection with the universe is a mysterious one, and a

sudden glimpse of this connection can infinitely enrich even the poorest life. Only the experience of this fullness, for which a single moment suffices, can make us understand that not more than three years of Christ's activity could be of importance for so many centuries.

To be so completely independent of external circumstances fills man with a happiness which is strong and serene and which he could not have predicted. The prince speaks of an execution when, even during the instant that the knife fell, the victim was filled with the strongest consciousness of life, and he exclaims during an epileptic fit: "Can anyone be unhappy?" [28] and refuses to consider this exclamation as a mere consequence of his disease. The experience of this infinite moral wealth which is possible in every second and for which even a fraction of a second is time enough, opens to everybody the way to the greatest happiness, and thus another threat disappears. Life can no longer seem too long and there is no longer need to kill time, for with such possibilities life has a meaning, not only for the rich or for the hero, but for all of us.

The figure of Christ is freed from the Gothic mask which so easily misleads us and which contributes most perhaps, to our present difficulties in understanding what it signifies. The life of Christ is seen as a happy one thanks to this same fullness, governed not by asceticism and enmity to life, but by a living and intense joy in it as being, despite all His sufferings, one of the deepest happiness. Later, a dream of Alyosha Karamazov emphasizes this interpretation. He dreams of the marriage at Cana, where Christ changes water into wine so that men may be made happy; Christ comes to bring

[28] The Idiot, Everyman's library, p. 541.

joy and to free human life from measurement by the yardstick.

Strangely enough, however, the attitude of the prince towards men seems highly un-Christian. On one occasion he is told: "You have no gentleness, but only justice—so you are unjust," [29] and this reproach seems justified, for he analyses everybody's character mercilessly, his sole concern being with truth, and this continual analysis seems altogether cruel. We meet here what seems an important contradiction within morality. Truth, as the avoidance of lies, is certainly one of its highest commands, but the relentless search for truth can, at the same time, be very cruel, so that it appears more moral to spare man for the sake of love. This contradiction, moreover, implies a second one. The feeling for good and evil, by which morality exists, is entirely independent of intellectual knowledge and can be found in its entirety in quite illiterate persons. It seems superfluous, therefore, to investigate it at all or to strive for such a knowledge. It may even be most accessible to those who have not been spoiled by reasoning. But it is not possible to stop such an intellectual development; we cannot force man back into a state of primitive nature, nor does it seem possible to ask for truthfulness and to forbid the search for truth. Yet both these contradictions are solved by the behaviour of the prince which seems so very un-Christian.

It is particularly striking that he observes with great objectivity, not only other people's characters, but also his own. He admits without hesitation to having been an idiot, and he never tries to defend himself against any attack, because he examines at once whether the reproach is justified, without in the least attempting to hide his weaknesses. The prince distinguishes in every

[29] *Op. cit.*, p. 416.

man between his character, his acquired way of dealing with events, which is always imperfect, and that which is fundamentally good in his nature, his soul. He sees the character as being dependent upon external conditions, as a simple fact which, whether it is his own or somebody else's, he can consider quite objectively, because he sees the soul as what is of real value, so that to analyse a man's character does not mean to judge him. He can analyse it so dispassionately only because his faith in the soul is so unshakable. He tries to unite men on a spiritual basis so that they can join together in their struggle with their imperfect characters and the external conditions which govern them, for the sake of their souls. He even goes so far as not to condemn "double motives." [30] In the common view, it seems thoroughly wrong that our noblest impulses frequently support the most unworthy motives; the prince, however, takes it as a matter of course that every thought is determined by both the character and the soul, so that to admit that a man's motives are mixed does not deny his good impulses. This knowledge should rather help us to strengthen our good intentions.

Thus, however, we see the importance of a developed consciousness. It is improbable that we shall succeed in subordinating ourselves to the demands of the soul without a clear awareness of its nature; we all know how many subterfuges the instincts use to get their way, so that it is only with the help of the most highly developed self-knowledge that we can hope to distinguish clearly between instinctive desire and moral necessity. We saw in our consideration of Kant the need we have of knowledge if goodness is not to succumb, and the consequent indispensability of moral knowledge despite the

[30] *Op. cit.*, p. 298.

original independence of morality from the intellect. This intellectual awareness of the prince and the fact that his absolute truthfulness in each situation necessarily leads him to search for a more and more comprehensive truth show the impossibility of thinking of Christ as being opposed to the use of the intellect, and indicate rather that He possessed perhaps the clearest consciousness that man ever had. This again is most important in making His teaching and example accessible to us.

This distinction between character and soul also makes clear the most important Christian concept, that of love of mankind. It prevents us from judging one another, for everybody must struggle with the character which he has acquired as a result of reacting to many different circumstances, and our ignorance of the course of this struggle in others forbids us to condemn them. At the same time, it frees this love of mankind from weakness and sentimentality, for it is just when we do not condemn our fellows but trust in their souls that we can make the highest demands of them.

The essence of this love is shown particularly clearly by a transformation which the prince undergoes in the course of the book. At the beginning, his desire is to help. But he is disappointed because whether or not he is able to help depends on external circumstances, and because he sees that the best intentions may lead to the opposite of what he wants and harm those he tries to help. To help, therefore, cannot be the true aim. The more the prince is involved in the affairs of this world, the more, too, does this intention disappear, to be replaced by the pure feeling of love which, without any question of intention, completely dominates him. He helps, of course, wherever he can, but this desire is no longer the chief force which moves him; what is more important

is his complete subjugation by the need to experience the suffering of others as if it were his own. In the end this feeling is so strong that it even overcomes his love for Aglaya; when Nastasya is hurt by her, he is forced to remain with Nastasya because her suffering is so great, although he loves Aglaya. The desire to help has completely disappeared, and he stays although he knows that he could help Aglaya and that Nastasya cannot be saved by any sacrifice.

It is this decision which, in spite of the catastrophe which follows from it, makes his figure perfect. A single egoistic action could have saved him, but he is powerless to do it; he must succumb to his experience of the sufferings of others, for what matters is not the help that he might give, but his example. It is only the setting of an example which does not force upon others the kind of help which they perhaps neither need nor understand, but leaves them free to experience whatever may enable them to choose the way in which they can develop with or without help. The giving of such an example throws the emphasis upon the perfection of the individual, upon a perfection which can be achieved not by egoism, but only by love of mankind, for only by being completely accessible to every experience can personality be developed and enhanced. Yet this love must not degenerate into superficial pity, it must remain active even when it cannot help others any longer and when, because of their inevitable suffering, one's own destruction is the only result.

A new light is thus shed upon the crucifixion of Christ. During the disasters which overtake the prince, he seems to feel the inevitability of his final breakdown, and gradually submits to it. But he does not accept it blindly and for its own sake; he says again and again that he

would be saved if one single person were able really to understand him; he only abandons himself to disaster when his nearest friends leave him, so that his memory may be preserved in them without distortion. Christ accepts His death only when His disciples sleep even on the Mount of Olives, without understanding that it is the hour of His greatest struggle; His terrible public death is the last means of making His example plain. This hesitation emphasizes that such a death is not an end in itself, that it is neither a hero's nor a martyr's death, but the expression of the greatest love. Myshkin and Christ die because men do not understand them; it is for this reason alone that they must establish their example by their death. It would be better if their example could have its effect in their lifetime, so that to love mankind might lead to something other than suffering, and humanity grow mature and make possible a Christ who is not crucified. It is not pity for the Crucified which matters, but on the contrary the recognition that the terrible death on the cross shows that perfection can express itself even by such a catastrophe. This death should turn our attention back to the life of Christ; and the mystical element in it, the atonement of sins, is not merely something to be accepted, but an encouragement to us to follow His example.

This is proved, too, by those words of Christ on the cross which must confuse any other interpretation, by the words: "God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." Their meaning is made clear in the book by the description of a picture of Holbein, which shows Christ after His taking down from the cross. Dostoevsky describes how true to nature is the painting of His terribly deformed corpse, "a poor mangled body which had

evidently suffered unbearable anguish even before its crucifixion, full of wounds and bruises, marks of violence of the soldiers and people, and of the bitterness of the moment when He had fallen with the cross—all this combined with the anguish of the actual crucifixion." [31] If it was the death which mattered, then both this picture and those words would lead us to conclude that the belief in Christ was wrong, for if this body could be destroyed like any other body, and if Christ Himself was finally forced to doubt, there is no justification for such a faith. But this conclusion is wrong, because it is His life, and not His death, which matters most. His example is valid for us just because He died a natural death, because His life was not a mere spectacle performed by a strange being, and for the very reason that His death did not show Him to be a god in disguise. We can follow His example because He lived and died as a human being.

These conclusions are confirmed in *The Brothers Karamazov*. There Father Zossima's influence is preserved just because the expected miracle does not happen. All his disciples expect his body not to putrefy after death; they are ready to worship the great saint and to rely upon external signs. When no miracle occurs, they are deeply hurt, but it is because of this that they become able to understand his teaching completely. The Grand Inquisitor amplifies this lesson. He says to Christ: "Thou didst not come down from the cross when they shouted for Thee . . . for . . . Thou wouldst not enslave man by a miracle, and didst crave faith given freely." [32] Man has to learn by his own experience that the example is valid. It is not death, but the living experience, that matters.

[31] *Op. cit.*, pp. 395–396.
[32] The Brothers Karamazov, Everyman, Vol. 1, p. 262.

Father Zossima is the second of those characters who help to make Dostoevsky's meaning clear. He expresses in abstract and comprehensive teaching what is embodied in Prince Myshkin's life, adding to the symbolic the spiritual interpretation of Christianity. He states unequivocally that Christianity cannot remain a simple set of external dogmas, but that it has to be transformed into human experience, for it embodies those facts and ideals which are in keeping with man's better nature. The Christian commands are valid only because they are true to life and lead to genuine happiness. "For men are made for happiness, and anyone who is completely happy has a right to say to himself, 'I am doing God's will on earth.' " [33]

The society of the time which is usually considered as clever and realistic is "interpreting freedom as the multiplication and rapid satisfaction of desire," but thus it is put under "bondage to the habit of satisfying the innumerable desires" which make happiness and natural human behaviour impossible; "they have succeeded in accumulating a greater mass of objects, but the joy in the world has grown less." [34] It is the Christian attitude which solves these problems. Zossima asks: "Can it be a dream that in the end man will find his joy only in deeds of light and mercy, and not in cruel pleasures as now, in gluttony, ostentation, boasting and envious rivalry of one with the other?" [35]—and to ask this question already implies the positive answer, for we must decide for "the deeds of light and mercy."

Zossima also helps us to take this decision seriously, not merely as a pious sentiment, but as a real decision, for his deeper knowledge of the world shows that it is

[33] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 51.
[34] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 325.
[35] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 329.

realistic and that all external means of combating evil are impotent compared with the truly Christian attitude. "Loving humility is marvellously strong, the strongest of all things, and there is nothing else like it." [36] It is men whom we have to influence, and this humility awakens in them their better natures which, supported by this example, must sooner or later have their way. For Zossima, all this "is so simple that sometimes one is afraid to put it into words, for fear of being laughed at, and yet how true it is!" [37] It is indeed so true and convincing that this way of transforming the world must be possible. It obviously depends on us whether this force will assert itself once more, and whether the renewal of its power and its final victory will be secured.

This renewal is prepared for by Zossima when he shows the supreme importance of the free choice of each individual. He recognizes that "we are all responsible to all for all," [38] and he tries to strengthen that sense of responsibility which must be understood in a literal and not in a mystical sense. We must know "that every one of us is undoubtedly responsible for all men and everything on earth, not merely through the general sinfulness of creation, but each one personally for all mankind and every individual man." [39] He proves this fact again and again. "You pass by a little child . . . spiteful, with ugly words, with wrathful heart; you may not have noticed the child, but he has seen you, and your image, unseemly and ignoble, may remain in his defenceless heart. You don't know it, but you may have sown an evil seed in him and it may grow." The consequences of our actions, and thus our responsibility for them,

[36] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 302.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 313.
[39] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 164.

spread out so intricately that we cannot follow them in detail: "All is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up a movement at the other end of the earth." [40] There can be only one reply to this. "Go at once and seek suffering for yourself, as though you were yourself guilty of that wrong. Accept that suffering and bear it and your heart will find comfort, and you will understand that you too are guilty, for you might have been a light to the evil-doers, even as the one man sinless, and you were not a light to them." [41]

By this realization of an all-inclusive responsibility, the external world and human nature are interconnected to a degree which would otherwise be impossible, for thus every event, every fact, demands an interpretation in human terms, an interpretation which may fundamentally affect our lives. Dead things come to life, because we are forced to see everything in its relation to our own existence and our own deeds, and to be prepared to respond to the demands it therefore makes on us. This is confirmed by the experience of each of us. While we consider misfortunes as purely external happenings which we do not deserve, we are overcome by their cruelty, but when we see them, not as afflictions from outside, from other people, from an inexplicable fate, but as connected with forces within us which make it our duty to deal even with undeserved misfortunes, we can act, we can transform them into stimuli and respond to them by changing ourselves or our ways of behaviour. All external events can be interpreted in a number of different ways, and therefore the interpretation matters more than the event itself. The stronger our feeling of responsibility, the greater the number of events which we can see as stimuli,

[40] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 331.
[41] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 334.

and the more freely and fruitfully we are able to experience the world.

The effects of this feeling of responsibility are the greater in that they make it easier for us to love our fellow men, by making it impossible for us to judge them. The only possible reaction to the awareness of our responsibility for the evil which happens to them or which is done by them is a love strong enough to destroy our own demands or preoccupations. The valuelessness of outbursts of sentimental love is clearly perceived. "Everyone can love occasionally, even the wicked can." [42] Only "love in action" can help us, and this love "is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams . . . is labour and fortitude." It is this love which becomes our most important duty—"perhaps a complete science." [43]

It is this love, too, which once more increases our possibilities of action, for on it, finally, even the very possibility of living depends. Only meaningless pain is destructive; when we love men, the recognition of our responsibility and guilt no longer depresses or angers us. Real love, however painful, is gradually transformed so that we experience in it "the great mystery of human life that old grief passes gradually into quiet, tender joy." [44] When we see this connection between guilt and love we are able to recognize a mysterious but firm certainty that there is a positive meaning in life, and thanks to it we feel that neither cruelty nor injustice can finally triumph. It is no accident that Job experiences his greatest joy and his most secure happiness in the midst of his afflictions, which are the more painful for being undeserved. Zossima, however, does not only interpret the

[42] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 331.
[43] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 54.
[44] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 300.

fate of Job, but even succeeds in giving a human interpretation to the most dangerous symbol of Christianity. No fires burn in the hell in which he believes, for physical sufferings would be a welcome distraction from the greater pain which comes from the knowledge of having missed an opportunity which will never recur—that of actively loving men and making proper use of our short and unique lives. But it is just because there are no fires that there can be salvation from this hell, for even this pain implies the possibility of a final joy. Life is freed from the dangers and limitations of an absolute negation.

His teaching carries conviction, because Dostoevsky succeeds in showing its consequences as overwhelmingly beautiful. Zossima emphasizes again and again the importance of example; he knows, decades before Freud, how important are the experiences of childhood, experiences which are mainly determined by the example of grown-ups, and he claims that the example of one saint alone would suffice to keep faith alive. This claim, however, convinces us because he does not only talk of an example, but also succeeds in being one.

He is confronted with the heroic ascetic Father Ferapont who is worshipped as a saint, because he lives the life of a hermit, "devout in fasting and observing silence." [45] Zossima appears weak and indulgent by comparison, yet it is quite clear that he is far superior to Ferapont. Ferapont, in his brave and severe solitude, only succeeds in feeding his vanity, but Zossima lives a full and pure life. He does not depend for his happiness upon the normal external circumstances of well-being, but upon his ordinary daily experiences, even what seem the least important ones; the common sights and sounds

[45] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 166.

of every day strengthen in him that tender serenity which he considers, and makes us accept, as the surest sign of the fulfilment of a moral and a Christian life. His joyful feeling of community with other men is alive even in his deepest sorrows. He alone can face the terrible strength of the Karamazovs and force even the father to silence, and his great intellect awakens sincere respect in Ivan. His faith is so clear and so passionately alive that the most important "contact with other mysterious worlds" [46] is transmitted to us as a clear and moving experience.

Finally, the interpretation of the crucifixion is amplified by the example of his death. He clings to life with almost superhuman strength until he has said his last word to his disciples, but then, "as though in joyful ecstasy," he gives up "quietly and joyfully . . . his soul to God." [47] His death shows that this life has reached its deepest and most significant fulfilment, showing that this last moment, which threatens to make life meaningless, can be the crowning glory of life, if it is lived, up to the last moment, with awareness of its meaning. We feel convinced that if such a strong personality as Zossima can find complete satisfaction in morality and Christianity, and if his development and achievements are due to them, they cannot simply be a childish belief, but must be true to life and able to guide our lives as well.

Nevertheless, in the creation of these two characters, Dostoevsky has not yet countered the negative part of his view of the world, for both of them owe their perfection to special circumstances. Prince Myshkin is ill; he is protected by disease from all experiences which might disturb or embitter him until he reaches the age of

[46] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 332.
[47] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 336.

twenty-four, and it is for this reason that he can live in a state of such childlike purity. Even afterwards, his epilepsy increases his susceptibility to those experiences which help the fulfilment of his aims. Zossima lives in a monastery, sheltered from the world, surrounded by disciples; his death in particular is possible because of this way of life. He sends Alyosha out into the world so that his teaching may become real, and thus he indicates that he is setting him an aim which is superior to his own. Both Myshkin and Zossima, moreover, speak for a Christianity untouched by Dostoevsky's own attacks, and many of their utterances are indistinguishable from the falsified tradition. The valid refutation of his own negation, therefore, can be found not in these characters, but in the whole of his work.

It is through his most important experience—his being sentenced to death—that he comes to this answer. Dostoevsky himself had suffered what Myshkin describes; he had been sentenced to death and reprieved only at the very last moment, after all the preparations for his execution had been made and after he had lived through many minutes with the terrible certainty of death. These minutes acquired an infinite value for him; they "seemed to him to be a most interminable period, an enormous wealth of time . . . so that there was no need as yet to think of the last moment." Each second was filled with supreme happiness, for the blood was still flowing through his veins, and one thought still followed another, and even if those thoughts were quite ridiculous and trivial, they still implied the whole of an infinite, limitless life. His attitude towards life was fundamentally changed. At the last moment he was struck by the thought: "What if I were to return to life again? What an eternity of days, and all mine! How I should grudge

and count up every minute of it, so as to waste not a single instant!" [48] He did return to life, and it did become, without regard for what it brought, of infinite value for him.

This complete acceptance of life characterizes all his works. It is his own conviction which finds expression in the desire of the prisoner who claims that "if he were permitted to live somewhere high up on a mountain, on such a narrow slab that only his two feet could find room to stand, and around him abysses, the ocean, eternal darkness, eternal solitude and eternal storm, and if he had to spend his whole life, a thousand years, an eternity, standing on such a narrow slab, it would seem better to him to live thus than to die immediately. Only to live, to live! No matter how, if only he lives!" This paean of life is one of the most important characteristics of his work—of a work which shows all the hell of this earth and leads us to the very limits of negation and complete despair. He never doubts the glory of this earthly life, however miserable it may be. Even with the voice of Dmitri Karamazov, Dostoevsky still thanks the moment of his greatest torment for the strength which it has given him. It is out of the deepest abyss, faced with the most terrible suffering, that he exclaims with Dmitri: "I seem to have such strength in me now, that I think I could stand anything, any suffering, only to be able to say and to repeat to myself every moment, 'I exist.' In thousands of agonies—I exist. I'm tormented on the rack—but I exist! Though I sit alone on a pillar—I exist! I see the sun, and if I don't see the sun, I know it's there. And there's a whole life in that." [49]

This acceptance of life was put to a very severe test at

[48] The Idiot, Everyman, p. 56.
[49] The Brothers Karamazov, Everyman, Vol. 2, p. 246.

once by Dostoevsky's meeting with criminals, which came as a result of his sentence being reduced to penal servitude. He went to prison with the hope of finding goodness and humanity even in criminals, and this hope was fulfilled; he even had to confess that at first he overlooked the good in them and underrated their humane feelings. But he went with the usual concepts of morality and believed, therefore, that the criminal, if morality was still alive in him, was tortured by remorse. But that obviously did not happen. He was forced again and again to see that even murder did not weigh on these men, that they remembered their deeds with pride and were convinced that their punishment was unjust. He was forced to ask himself what was the meaning of the good in man, if it can exist by the side of criminal instincts without having any effect. It seemed that this must endanger any belief in morality at all, for if a normal man can murder another without in the least feeling that what he has done is evil, then the belief that all men have moral sense is untrue.

Yet his having been so close to death helps Dostoevsky even here. The conscious experience of a single second not only showed him the value of life, but also made clear to him the subtlest psychological reactions. He understands in the most minute detail the processes of thinking and feeling which cause and accompany action; in this experience is rooted the psychological acuteness in which he transcends all others. He sees that morality is not only expressed by conscience, but that the wicked and inhuman deeds destroy man's true nature. It is possible for the murderer to leave the scene of his crime cheerfully, to enjoy having his booty and even to boast of what he has done, yet gradually, without his noticing it, he is changed. His character becomes more and more

coarsened; he becomes restless or dulled, unhappy and repulsive, unable to feel happiness and even lust. Such a deed must have evil consequences in the doer of it. All the criminals of whom Dostoevsky speaks scream and shout in their dreams; they are "insulted and injured" by their own deeds.

Crime has the same consequences as the exercise of power, for crime also is a misuse of human lives, and of the abuse of power Dostoevsky in *The House of the Dead* says: "Tyranny is a habit capable of being developed, and at last becomes a disease. I declare that the best man in the world can become hardened and brutalized to such a point, that nothing will distinguish him from a wild beast. Blood and power intoxicate; they aid the development of callousness and debauchery; the mind becomes capable of taking pleasure in the most abnormal cruelty; the man and the citizen disappear for ever in the tyrant; and then a return to human dignity, repentance, moral resurrection, becomes almost impossible." [50] It is only in the moral world that man can develop freely towards his highest possibilities, and achieve the inner harmony which they alone can give. Man must be measured not only by his ethical sense, but also by his inner moral beauty and his completeness. "What we call moral is only what is in accordance with our feeling for beauty and with the ideal in which this finds its expression."

Thanks to his extraordinary psychological insight, Dostoevsky recognizes the true power of the moral world. In *Crime and Punishment*, where his attention is focussed on a criminal deed, he shows how enormous are the moral powers which struggle against the bestial instincts and wrong conclusions of man. He shows that the unnatural violation of Raskolnikov's character can, and that finally it must, be overcome.

[50] The House of the Dead, Everyman, p. 229.

In this novel, Dostoevsky first achieves the logical consummation of the European tradition. Raskolnikov's progress from the murder to his confession is worked out so exactly and convincingly that it seems as precise and certain as the running of a clock. The aim which had so preoccupied the 19th century—that of understanding man's actions with the exactness of the natural sciences—is reached when Dostoevsky shows, in the minutest detail, the domination of causality in the sphere of feeling. Even in the tiniest vibrations of feelings and thoughts, cause and effect are linked with a necessity that leaves no room for question or comment. It is this work which makes Nietzsche assert that Dostoevsky "is the only psychologist from whom I could learn anything." [51]

But for Dostoevsky this is only a beginning. He shows that Raskolnikov's actions, which seem to follow intentionally from his plans, are always brought about by some kind of suffering. He is driven on by impressions which he accepts passively and which he must accept, because they suit his real motives better than his conscious intentions. It is because of these influences that his actions seem so inevitable. Intentions and activity always leave open the possibility of choice; it is only suffering which determines the course of action so definitely that no possibility of deviating or of escaping it remains. This development is similar to that which occurred in painting when the composition of the Renaissance was developed by Rembrandt. The composition of the Renaissance was very precise, but it was still possible to alter the position of the single parts of a painting in their relation to one another; it is only when Rembrandt adds a special lighting to this composition, so that every alteration would bring about a quite different distribution of light and shade, that the composition seems inevitable.

[51] Nietzsche, Götzendämmerung, Streifzüge, § 45.

Rembrandt's lighting, however, not only contributes to the composition of his pictures, but also expresses new feelings, and thus leads us beyond the Renaissance. In the same way this coming to the fore of suffering during the execution of a determined and well planned action has a most important meaning of its own. When we speak of suffering an influence, we do not only refer to a purely passive state, but also to the experiencing of pain and affliction. It is this suffering which plays the greatest part in the whole novel, for the path which Raskolnikov follows leads him to greater and greater afflictions. But it is this suffering, too, which gives a meaning to his deeds. Immediately after his crime he is completely stunned, but his misery forces him to reflect upon what he has done and to become aware of his real plans and intentions, and thus eventually of the nature of the moral world within him.

Dostoevsky succeeds to an amazing degree in reconciling the mechanical necessity of events with their moral implications. The fact that the concept of destiny acquires a positive meaning and that it is seen throughout as a merciful providence does not in the least lessen the horrors of Raskolnikov's purgatory; the normal causal connection between happenings is never broken; everything which happens is completely justified by external motives; and yet everything contributes to the moral development. Thus, however, the moral law is seen as an inner law and not as an unnatural interpretation of man's actions or an arbitrary addition to his nature; mechanical necessity is convincingly confronted with moral necessity. In later novels, Dostoevsky even shows that the greatest vitality need not cut man off from the moral world, but can lead him to experience it more intensely.

The paean of life thus acquires a deeper meaning. The

demand that we should transform our destiny through morality is no mere demand that we should change our natures; because of the mysterious harmony between the universe without and the moral world within, this transformation becomes possible and, if we are to live in accordance with the purpose of our existence, inevitable. Life is freed from the power of a restricting valuation; whether it is ruined by the striving for deeds too great for it or whether it is limited to the passive endurance of the closest bondage, whether it is noble and pure or lost in a maze of all too powerful instincts—every human life is subject to a higher law and thus has its part in the meaning of existence.

Suffering, inevitable as it is, does not lessen this value which we see in life, for it is our guide to its depths. Whenever we penetrate beneath the surface of life, either to a sudden illumination or to confusion, our first reaction is one of pain and of the need for an adjustment which must cause us suffering. This suffering, though not to be desired for its own sake, is properly regarded as a guide, because it is through the cruellest experiences that we can learn most and are freed most from the forces that hold us back. We must accept life without any reservation, therefore, for it is only through accepting the suffering which we cannot escape, even at the risk of being destroyed, that we can understand the true nature of humanity. This acceptance is the final expression of our moral nature, for otherwise our inevitable cruel experiences would destroy its meaning. We may struggle against this, but we cannot be complete human beings while we oppose our moral natures, and it is only when we achieve this absolute trust in our fate that we can feel a harmony between the outward course of our lives and our true being.

The Brothers Karamazov shows how tremendous is this power of the moral world. Dmitri and Ivan are driven, by the terrible strength of the Karamazovs, towards the murder of their father. Dmitri stands, alone, a weapon in his hand, utterly bewildered and furious, while his father's face, which he hates with an almost physical disgust, bends over him; Ivan is eaten up by the desire to cling to his conviction that "everything is lawful" and to prove it; yet neither kills their father, for both are saved by the moral strength which is a part of the strength of the Karamazovs. It gains its greatest power from that very lust for life which wants to plunge into the lowest depths.

Not even the greatest suffering is able to destroy this power. Dmitri is accused of the murder; the preliminary investigation is a terrible ordeal, yet each stage of it provides further testimony of the power of the moral world. When Dmitri is told that the servant he has knocked down is not dead, his joy is so great that his increased danger cannot affect it. The removal of this burden from his conscience has an infinitely greater effect upon him than anything which concerns his own safety. The form the investigation takes becomes more and more unbearable, but Dmitri suffers because he sees that his judges, lacking the ability to understand it, offend not only him, but also the world of moral values.

How could the power of this moral world be proved more convincingly? Here stands a man who ought to struggle to save his life and to be reunited with the woman he loves, a reunion for which he longs with all his might, and yet he does not, because to struggle successfully he would have to leave the world of moral values and come down to the level of his opponents. Dmitri finally has to confess where he took the money from, and

the judges laugh at him, for, from an intellectual point of view, this offence seems small by comparison with the suspicion of murder. We, however, are able to see that it is this deed which drives Dmitri to despair, for conscience does not judge the effect of a deed, but the reason for it, not the actual event, but the feeling which causes it. We, too, long for Dmitri to be saved, and yet we no longer consider whether his actions will save him, but judge from a purely moral point of view, and so we are glad that he is not ready to buy his freedom by betraying the moral world.

Ivan has the greatest interest in knowing as little as possible of Smerdyakov's part in the affair, for only if he believes in Dmitri's guilt is he himself saved, but he does not rest until he has forced from Smerdyakov the confession that he is the murderer. At this moment, because of his share in the guilt, we expect him to break down, but as this knowledge drives him to the decision to denounce himself, it also sets him free. His acceptance of the values of the moral world gives him, perhaps for the first time, in spite of all the torments which he thus brings upon himself, the feeling of pure joy. He is confronted once more in an hallucination, in his vision of the devil, by all his extreme intellectual conclusions, and the conclusions of Kirillov and Nietzsche, of Raskolnikov and the Grand Inquisitor are followed out to the end. Ivan wants, with all the strength of his character, to believe in them; he says to himself with bitter mockery: "You are going to perform an act of heroic virtue, and you don't believe in virtue. . . . You'll go because you won't dare not to go." [52] But all these seemingly irrefutable conclusions which he produces with such exertions collapse without any argument and without any visible refutation.

[52] The Brothers Karamazov, Everyman, Vol. 2, pp. 312–313.

Dostoevsky proves by this masterly embodiment of the subconscious, which introduces a new epoch of psychology and of art, that the existence of the moral world cannot be proved and that nevertheless it is impossible to believe in the intellect alone. It becomes evident that, despite all the complicated and elaborate conclusions, the final causes of murder are Smerdyakov's motives—his greed for money and his lust for blood. It is clear, too, that a life which is worthy of man cannot be lived by the light of intellectual conclusions which may be used to support evil motives, but only by that of conscience and morality. Once more we rejoice in the victory of the moral world, however deeply we feel the suffering which it causes Ivan.

A new conception of the world appears during the trial of Dmitri because of these moral factors. Dostoevsky gives two accounts of what has happened, one by the prosecutor and one by the counsel for the defence, and both come very near the truth, but it is their very nearness which throws into relief their most important mistake, their lack of understanding of the moral world.

The prosecutor's knowledge of mechanical necessity is Dostoevsky's own; he speaks of an execution and of the ordeals of the preliminary investigation; but at the same time he defends the conventional moral concepts. He is a fanatic for official justice, for good customs, for love of country. But as a result, in spite of the correctness of many details, his reconstruction of the events is entirely wrong. A mechanical psychological theory of cause and effect no longer suffices to explain man's actions, for it leaves too much in doubt and must be supported by a deeper understanding of human nature, which cannot be gained by relying upon conventional moral concepts, but only on a new conception of the moral world which

is true to life. When the prosecutor, comparing Western Europe with Russia, exclaims: "They have their Hamlets, but we still have our Karamazovs!",[53] he judges only himself, for, compared with Hamlet's still undeveloped and partially realized conflict of conscience, the terrible inner struggle of the Karamazovs appears as the promise of a new future. The only justification which the prosecutor could have would be the firm belief which can be felt in his words, yet even this belief is meaningless, because it is based on inadequate understanding. Mere sincerity is no longer sufficient; the new faith must be true and living.

Dmitri's counsel, on the other hand, knows that "profound as psychology is, it's a knife which cuts both ways" [54] and admits of any interpretation. For the sake of the case he is making out, he presupposes the innocence of the Karamazovs and succeeds, therefore, in reconstructing the events correctly. But these correct deductions only make his mistake more obvious and more disastrous. Instead of proving that the Karamazovs are guiltless by showing that conscience is what moves them most, he suddenly starts to exploit the bestiality of the father to excuse the murder which he denies. In his desire to pay attention to any possible intellectual deduction, he proves conclusively that Dmitri has not committed the murder, and proves just as conclusively that such a murder could not be condemned. But it is this exaggerated trust in logical conclusions which leads to the final disaster, because, while he relies on the persuasive power of logic, his behaviour shows that he does not believe in any of his conclusions, and this makes him responsible for the severe sentence which breaks Dmitri

[53] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 378.
[54] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 390.

and Ivan. Even a completely correct and unprejudiced knowledge of psychology remains insufficient if it is not accompanied by the knowledge of the moral world.

During the course of the trial, however, an important change in our own viewpoint is brought about. Because everybody is wrong in his judgment of the Karamazovs, we recognize the hollowness and depravity of the world which dares to pass judgment on them. We see that this world itself is doomed and that the Karamazov family rises above its chaotic ruins as the promise of a new and better world. The accused become the real accusers. This society which seemed in the 19th century, because of its peace and efficiency, to be established for ever, now stands itself accused before these prisoners who once appeared to embody chaos, and passes judgment upon itself.

The answer to the negation has been given. He who rejects the moral world falls "into the hands of the living God"; the power of the moral world within us and its power to control our lives is so great that we cannot resist it, so that we must either follow it or destroy ourselves. In this matter all speculation is useless; we cannot understand our human nature in the terms of the intellect. The task of the intellect is not to prove the existence of the moral world, but to accept and to explore it. Even love for mankind, "taken purely as an idea, is one which men find most difficult to grasp." Dostoevsky asks on one occasion why it is immoral to shed blood, and rightly claims: "If I assert the contrary, you will not be able to refute my statement in any way." In spite of this, however, it is impossible to deny love for mankind without also denying man. The sooner we use our intellect in this way, the more fully we trust humanity and providence, the more quickly shall we make all proofs superfluous

and solve the conflicts which threaten us with annihilation.

Dostoevsky, however, does not show us the moral world itself. He makes it clear that it must be founded upon Christianity, and he gives a new and convincing interpretation to many of its elements, and those its most important ones, but he does not show how morality could be linked with Christianity in contemporary life, nor how our society would be transformed by it. The chaos is overcome only so far as is necessary to show what it is that could overcome it, but the forces of chaos and of the moral world are still in the balance. He makes it clear that the two symbolical characters really are valid examples and that their teaching is true, but the development of the figure of Alyosha, which was to show us the possibility of a moral and Christian life in our present world, the life of a Christ who is not crucified, set in the framework of our daily life, remains unfinished. The profound effect which Alyosha has upon children is seen as a promise of what is to come, but it remains a promise.

Yet this is inevitable. The artist can go as far as he is able in his presentation of reality, but he must not strive to depict Utopia, for this would replace the living work of art by a dead plan. It is this incompleteness, however, which heightens the effect of the book. The moral world becomes real for us just because reality is not artificially transformed and because in the end everything is as chaotic as in the beginning, for only thus does the moral world appear, not as an unreal consolation, but as a part of our still chaotic lives. Only thus is it possible for the book to show us, not a special form of the good which does not affect us personally, but the possibility of its realization which is a spur to us. The planned second part of the novel could not possibly have been written at

that time. It is no accident that the short notes and the rumours which have been preserved concerning it suggest only a weaker repetition of the first part. Any continuation, any solution brought about artificially, would have lessened its importance.

Some of the elements, however, which the work still leaves confused are shown more clearly in Dostoevsky's own life—a life which is one of the most magnificent examples of the extent to which a man can transform himself and give a meaning to what happens to him by rightly interpreting his experiences.

The young Dostoevsky, over-sensitive and pathologically nervous, was overwhelmed by the death sentence and, after his reprieve, by his deportation to the "House of the Dead" in Siberia—a cruel experience which many of his more robust comrades did not survive. Later, suffering from a very bad form of epilepsy, he had to flee abroad, where he was exposed to appalling misery and where, as an invalid, he was unable to resist his most destructive passions. It seems that lunacy and disaster were destined for him rather than for the Romantics or for Nietzsche or for the many great artists in the 19th century who succumbed to this fate. But he it was who succeeded in overcoming all these dangers, who lived his life most fully and reached the greatest maturity. At the end of his life there was neither the revealing bleakness of a St. Helena nor the embitterment of a Schopenhauer; he was not forced to bow down in fanatical adherence to the letter of a creed, nor like Tolstoy to recant. His life is the first which, in spite of immense differences between them, can be compared with that of Goethe.

The greatness of his suffering seems surprising, coming as it does in an age which was no longer accustomed to true heroism and martyrdom. But he could not even shut

himself off from any danger; he was forced to give way to his extreme sensibility, to his misery and his passions and even made no effort to restrain his illness, for they were the means by which he experienced within himself the chaos which he had to reproduce. Yet the strength of the moral world within him was so great that he was able to overcome all dangers and to increase his powers even through disaster. All that he had to suffer seemed, at first, completely meaningless and well-nigh unbearable; yet fundamentally he was never dissatisfied and never rebelled against the ordeals which he had to face; he never faltered in his paean of life. And it was because he believed so completely that life has a meaning and that therefore we must not shrink from it that he was saved. Because he never shut himself away, because finally he always accepted his fate, he was able to experience life fully and to transform himself and his fate. It was by his absolute trust that he proved the power of the moral world.

His life and work formed a complete unity. Every stroke of fate which, at first sight, seemed only a senseless and cruel accident, eventually proved extraordinarily helpful in the development of his work and of the knowledge which he needed. We have already seen that the death sentence and his years in prison were most fruitful, and it was the same with his exile. Dostoevsky himself considered these years as worse than those in the "House of the Dead," but if they were as terrible, they were also as important and as stimulating as the former ones.

In the beginning, it seemed as if his moral principles led to disaster. After the death of his brother, Dostoevsky took over his debts and the duty of supporting his family on purely moral grounds and without any legal obligation, and it was because of this magnanimity that he was

forced to leave Russia, to avoid being thrown into the debtor's prison by the creditors. Abroad, the walls of the prison were replaced by degrading poverty. He was entirely dependent upon advance payments for his works, and these were almost always too late, so that time and again he was stranded in a foreign town without any money and without anyone whom he could ask for help. Most of his belongings went into the pawnshop. He was in debt to his landlady, to the grocer, to the doctor. At the same time his wife was expecting a baby. He was unable to leave the most unpleasant surroundings. In winter he had to stay in the Geneva which he hated, where his epilepsy became so much worse that he expected to go insane, and he had to spend the summer in two miserable attics in the heat of Florence, where he could hardly work at all. It is difficult to realize how unaware Europe was of its great guest; he must almost have rubbed shoulders with many of the greatest writers and philosophers of his age, yet his hour had not yet come. He remained lonely and unknown, although *Crime and Punishment*, which was to win him European fame, was already finished. This solitude, however, this deprivation of human intercourse, not only made life with his wife more difficult, but also increased his longing for Russia until it was almost unbearable, particularly as, at this time, his creative powers seemed to fail him.

His despair drove him to the gambling-table. There he could forget his distress for a few moments at least—and perhaps win the money necessary for the journey home. But gambling only increased his sufferings, for again and again he lost everything so that he was himself partly responsible for his terrible poverty. His passion, moreover, forced him to ask his wife to make unjustifiable sacrifices, and it also made his disease worse, and thus it

became more and more difficult for him to continue his work—the work which he knew to be his last hope. Eventually, however, even on the edge of this abyss, he was able to make use of his sufferings; his misery and the danger of insanity forced him to try at once to write one of his most important works, one which otherwise he would not yet have dared to write, and he produced *The Idiot*.

His new experience was, once more, similar to a previous one. His meeting with criminals in prison had helped him to see his own obsession with crime objectively and thus to express it in art, and so to overcome it. Similarly he now diverted his all too powerful sensuality and all his longing for "cruel voluptuousness" into his passion for gambling, thus escaping the dangers of these instincts. By directing those instincts, which would otherwise have damaged his fellow beings, against himself, he not only prevented his married life, which at that time he found almost unbearable, from being ruined, but was also able eventually to return to Russia after four years of exile, matured and purified. He had fought out the battle with himself and could concentrate all his strength, therefore, upon the most important problem—that of showing man his right place within the community. His first activity in Russia was the editing of the *Journal of an Author*, through which his ideas were able to exert a great influence and be further developed, in their turn, by the reactions of the public.

By this time he knew that it is fruitful activity alone which matters, and says farewell to his old favourite Don Quixote. Once more he honours in him the power of an idea, but now he recognizes how dangerous it is that "the highest beauty in man, the greatest purity, chastity, goodness, meekness, courage, and in the end even his

great intellect, very often . . . serve no purpose and are of no benefit to mankind, and even lead to his being mocked by others, because he who possesses all these noblest and richest gifts lacks only the last one—genius, which would enable him to give order to his wealth of gifts and direct them, not in a fantastic and crazy direction, but in one which serves mankind." He knows that, to find this way, it is not enough to be loyal to a conviction; to stick loyally to a wrong conviction is not honourable but disastrous; loyalty to the right convictions alone is important.

He rejects all set answers and parts company with Tolstoy, with whom he had previously more or less agreed. He still recognizes the validity of Tolstoy's demand for poverty, but he qualifies it: "Actually, one need not give one's belongings away, for any rigid adherence to commands will look here, in the realm of the works of love, similar to a uniform, to a rubric, to a dead letter. The conviction that he has fulfilled the letter only leads man to pride, to formalism and laziness. One must do what the heart demands; if it commands you to serve everybody, do it, but don't do it as some dreamers do, who immediately seize the wheelbarrow and say, 'I am no master, I want to work like a peasant.' The wheelbarrow again is only a uniform. On the contrary, if you feel that you can be useful to the community as a scholar, go to the university and retain the means you need for it. It is not necessary for you to give away your property, nor to put on a smock; the only thing that is necessary and important is your decision to do everything because of an active love, everything which is possible for you and which you yourself sincerely recognize as possible for you."

Now he knows, too, that "the mystery of the first step"

is solved by the individual's giving an example. So far as loving our fellow-beings is concerned, it is the individual that matters most; it is easier to love the whole of mankind than to live together with another man in the same room for two days, and our misfortune is that most people "love mankind and despise the single unfortunate man." It is only if we love individuals that we can understand the meaning of loving mankind. The teaching of a belief, too, depends ultimately on the individual. "Before you preach to men what they have to do, show it to them yourself. Obey your sermon yourself, and all will follow you. . . . This alone can be done at once by individuals. . . . If they find the true way, at last, and follow it, they will carry everybody with them, not by force, but freely. . . . This is very simple, but it is difficult to persuade oneself that one can only gather the full number by bringing in these individuals."

It is thus, however, that Dostoevsky is able to represent very clearly and finely and with great originality a socialism which does not frustrate mankind, but allows it to develop. He gives to the concepts "liberty, equality, fraternity," upon which any true socialism must be founded, a new and convincing interpretation. This interpretation, also, may seem to us to be very simple—even too simple; but if we remember Dostoevsky's work, we shall understand its full meaning. We must, when we consider these occasional remarks, remember the whole of his novels, so that we can take account, at the same time, of his revelation of man's nature and the wealth of feeling in his works.

His view of the nature of true liberty is this: "Our present world sees freedom only in license, yet true freedom lies in the overcoming of ourselves and of our own wills; only thus can we eventually attain to such a moral

state that everybody will be completely his own master at all times. The license of the appetites leads only to enslavement. Almost everybody sees freedom in financial security and in the laws which guarantee this financial security. 'I have money and therefore I can do whatever I like; I have money and therefore I shall never be ruined nor forced to ask anybody for help, and never to have to ask anybody for help is the highest freedom.' This, however, is not freedom, but slavery, slavery by money. The highest freedom, on the contrary, is not to save nor to gain money, but"—and here he does not contradict his criticism of Tolstoy, for here he is speaking no longer of the first step, but of the ideal—"to give away all our property and to serve everybody. If man is able to do this, if he can overcome himself to such a degree, he has reached the highest freedom."

Liberty requires equality, and Dostoevsky represents the achievement of this by a solution of one of the most difficult problems, of the conflict between the genius and the average human being, and between the master and the servant. This explanation, which is one of the last things which he ever wrote, is expressed with the greatest and most clear naïveté. "Imagine that there will be a Kepler, a Kant, and a Shakespeare in the society of the future. They are working at a great work for all men, and all men acknowledge it and respect them. But Shakespeare has no time to tear himself away from his work to tidy his room, to clean up everything. Be sure another citizen will infallibly come to wait upon him, of his own desire. He will come of his own free will and tidy up Shakespeare's room. Will he be thereby degraded? Will he be a slave? By no means. He knows that Shakespeare is infinitely more useful than he himself," and he will say to him: " 'I wish to do though it be only a little

service to the common good, for thus I will save your time for your great work, but I am not a slave. Indeed, by confessing that you, Shakespeare, are higher than myself by your genius, and coming to serve you, by this my admission I have proved that in the moral dignity I am not in the least below you, and as a man, I am your equal.' " [55] It is respect for one another and for the truly valuable achievements which must become the basis of equality.

With such a basis of liberty and equality, true fraternity is possible. Intellectual socialism cannot lead to it, because "even the slightest calculation concerning one's own advantage" represents that "tiniest little hair which, in spite of its smallness, destroys and disorganizes everything as soon as it gets into the machine." True brotherliness will come into being when every single individual, of his own free will and without thinking of his own advantage, says to his fellow men: "We are only strong if we all hold together; take me completely, therefore, if you need me; do not bother about me; I give you all my rights and ask you to dispose of me. My greatest happiness is to sacrifice everything for you." But society would have to answer: "You are giving us too much. We have no right to accept it from you, yet you say that this ability to give is what makes you happy. What, therefore, are we to do? . . . Take everything from us too. We shall strive incessantly with all our strength to arrange everything so that you have as much personal freedom as possible, and have as far as possible the right of self-determination. Do not be afraid of any enemies any longer, neither of men nor of nature. We are all with you . . . because we are brothers, and we are many

[55] Pages from the Journal of an Author, trans. by S. S. Koteliansky and J. Middleton Murry, p. 98.

and we are strong . . . so do not fear anything, therefore, but rely upon us." The highest development of personality leads to the most complete self-surrender, to the giving of the greatest service to the community, and such a community, in its turn, develops that personality and protects it.

Dostoevsky wanted to base this socialism upon Christianity; he emphasized the impossibility of the brotherhood of men without the fatherhood of God; but he succumbed once more, in spite of this knowledge, to a disastrous passion. He had been too lonely in Europe; he was seized by the fear that he would remain lonely even in Russia. When he came back, therefore, he joined the ranks of the Slavophile party, so as to be sure of finding a place in Russian life. In Europe he had recognized, moreover, how corrupt the social order had become there; "She is on the eve of ruin, your Europe, of a general, universal and terrible catastrophe," [56] he had said; and therefore he defended nationalism as a way of preventing any increase in the influence of Europe upon Russia. He did not defend this cause with a good conscience, however, and for this very reason he was driven into an extreme fanaticism; to persuade himself, to overcome all his doubts and all the reluctance which he felt, he fought for this ideology with fury. He proclaimed that "the renewal and resurrection of the whole of mankind will be accomplished, solely perhaps, through the Russian faith, the Russian God and the Russian Christ"; he demanded that the Nihilists should be ruthlessly and violently exterminated; he pleaded for war: "Without war, man is deadened by wealth and luxury and loses the ability to think and feel nobly; he is brutalized and falls into a state of barbarism." It is very painful to hear

[56] *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

these phrases from Dostoevsky, for it seems that his last passion may destroy all his great achievements.

But he was already too clear-sighted, and a proclamation of nationalistic passion could not be his last word. Gradually he gave the Slavophile concepts a new meaning, different from the usual one, but in accordance with his own teaching. Eight months before his death he was asked to address a meeting to honour the memory of Pushkin, and the speech which he made shows that he had changed again. In it there is no trace of his fanaticism. "Humble yourself, proud man, and first of all break down your pride. Humble yourself, idle man, and first of all labour!" [57]—this was the main demand which he made to the excited assembly, and he showed a true and universally valid way of advancing towards perfection. "Truth is not outside you, but in yourself. Find yourself in yourself, subdue yourself to yourself, be master of yourself and you will see the truth. Not in things is this truth, not outside you or abroad, but first of all in your labour upon yourself. If you conquer and subdue yourself, then you will be freer than you have ever dreamed, and you will begin a great work and make others free, and you will see happiness, for your life will be fulfilled and you will at last understand your people and its sacred truth." [58] This truth of the people, however, has lost any national tinge, for "to be a true Russian does indeed mean to aspire finally to reconcile the contradictions of Europe, to show the end of European yearning in our Russian soul, omnihuman and all-uniting, to include within our soul by brotherly love all our brethren, and at last, it may be, to pronounce the final Word of the great general harmony, of the final brotherly

[57] *Op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.
[58] *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

communion of all nations in accordance with the law of the gospel of Christ." [59]

Shortly before, he had been forced to overemphasize even his Christian feelings; he had said that if the truth should contradict Christ, "I prefer remaining in my error with Christ to having the truth." But now he knew that he could remain with Christ, because he had found the truth in Him and because his interpretation of Christianity had been true.

Even this last error, however, proved fruitful, because through it he succeeded in achieving what he had desired —contact with Russia and with the people. His speech, which, had it not been based on this "Slavophilism," would probably have passed unnoticed, had a success which surpassed all his expectations. He said the right word at the right moment. He himself, inclined as he always was to understate his successes, had to write to his wife: "Never will you be able to picture to yourself or to imagine the effect it produced! . . . When I came out, the hall thundered with applause . . . delight, enthusiasm (all because of the 'Karamazovs'!) . . . When at the end I proclaimed the universal union of men, the hall was in hysterics. When I finished—I can't describe to you the roar, the frenzy of delight . . . they all embraced and kissed me, and all, absolutely all, were crying with delight. . . . You are our saint, our prophet . . . shouted the crowd. . . . It was a complete, an absolutely complete victory!" He knew now that he had achieved what he had desired: "Those were pledges for the future, for everything, even if I were to die." [60]

Did he realize, at this moment, that he himself had

[59] *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

[60] The Letters of Dostoevsky to his Wife, transl. by E. Hill and D. Mudie, pp. 322–323.

fulfilled what he had prophesied in his youth, not of himself, but of someone who was still to come? He had written then: "If we examine all the European literatures of our time, we find everywhere traces of the same idea which will, at the end of the century perhaps, be perfectly, clearly and powerfully embodied in some work or art, which will express the endeavours of its age as faultlessly and as eternally as the *Divine Comedy*, for instance, did the epoch of the convictions of Catholicism and the ideals of the Middle Ages."

This crowning success at the end of his life gave Dostoevsky the strength to accept his death quietly and happily, and his behaviour was in keeping with everything that he had longed for and expressed in the death of Father Zossima. When he was struck down by his fatal illness, he was in the midst of preparing the next issue of his *Journal* and the second part of the Karamazovs; yet not for a moment did he show despair or impatience. He bade farewell to his family and his friends and prepared himself serenely, recognizing that everything he had begun was in fact finished. At his funeral, however, the whole of Russia seemed united behind his coffin. Without any preparation, the funeral became more impressive than that of any Czar had ever been. The triumph of the Pushkin festivities appeared as only a small indication of this overwhelming and moving homage. It seemed that death had made men recognize, suddenly and for a moment only, a fact which we still dispute today—that it was one of our most important teachers, the first architect of a new age, whom they were conducting to his grave.

CONCLUSION

THE dangerous trends of thought which we tried to follow in the 19th century—the intellectual flight from reality, the romantic glorification of the nation, the senseless hero-worship which had as its goal the impossible phantom of the superman, blind belief in progress, materialism, and a distorted socialism—all of these lead in the 20th century to the catastrophe which naturally follows them. The widespread chaos of the present day shows where these thoughts are bound to end.

Man's turning of his attention away from the real world destroys the power of his mind. Society, governed by industrialism and capitalism, is content to neglect the spiritual faculties which have become alien to the world; philosophy, art and religion, from being important factors in human life, sink to being inessential ornaments of existence. Most of the spiritual and intellectual leaders of our age are the blind tools of a development which they fail to understand. Science, it is true, plays an increasingly important part in our world, but far from resolving the chaos into order, it only increases it.

The overestimation of the nation leads to the creation of national states, but as the nation is not regarded as a framework which gives the individual an opportunity to develop, but is accepted uncritically as an end in itself, the success of the principle of the self-determination of nations only endangers our culture. National characteristics ought to be recognized so as to use them to fulfil those aims for which the nation is best qualified, but instead every nation is credited indiscriminately with all

possible merits, and even its mere name acquires the power of a magic charm. As a result, every nation is only concerned with increasing its power, and the great nations are driven into a disastrous struggle for world conquest. It is disastrous because the world can only be united by a supranational ideal; nationalism can lead to nothing but a senseless war of everybody against everybody, and in such world wars all nations must and do lose, for they undermine the predominance and even the existence of European civilization.

The self-sufficient ideal of heroism, considered also as an end in itself, makes any sensible aim impossible. Because man is forced by it to think only of the magnitude of his deeds, without applying any other standard, it comes to be used by forces which have nothing to do with heroism, which are hostile to all ideals. The search for ever greater deeds drives man onwards to the mechanized warfare which makes any heroic deed meaningless and which must finally destroy all ideals. It is probable that never before were there so many heroic deeds performed as in the last two wars, but they had only a minor and occasional influence upon the course of the wars, because the decision was with machines, and so they will be long forgotten when mankind still remembers the Greek heroes of Antiquity. War, "the father of all good," was supposed to bring the superman into being, but instead it was run by efficient bureaucrats, victims rather than masters of their age. The truly heroic deeds were done, not by demi-gods, but by the nameless atoms of the masses who sink into oblivion.

Blind belief in progress makes man the slave of material development, for the only sphere where it is possible to detect progress is in that of science and

technique. Such a development could only become true progress if man were able to control and to direct it, but his spiritual and moral powers lag so far behind that the machines, which could enable him finally to conquer nature, end by subjugating him even more completely than did the powers of nature. The highest achievement of science lies in the technical perfection of war, which leaves us in no doubt that this development is being transformed into the growing triumph of madness. Progress, restricted to technical achievements, destroys whatever could really be considered as progress.

This destruction cannot be prevented by a materialistic socialism. As the belief in progress is prevalent there too, its energies are wrongly directed from the very beginning. It denies, not only the false heroic and national ideas which support capitalism and imperialism, but the fundamental importance of ideas in general, and its adherents fail to realize that the most thorough external changes do not lead anywhere unless they are rightly used—used, that is, in accordance with the right ideas. It is true that some Socialist parties do not rely upon mere violence which is bound to destroy the right kind of socialism, but try to avoid the dangers inherent in any purely external organization of society. But they, too, lack the inspiring ideas which could lead beyond the solution of practical problems to a real transformation of the world. Man cannot build up a new world without struggling for it, and if he struggles only for the nationalization of the means of production, he will achieve nothing but the increase of the powers of the state which endanger those ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity which originally led him to strive for socialism and which alone can make it worth striving for.

It seems almost certain that some kind of socialist

organization is inevitable. The development of technique is the only achievement of the 19th century which cannot be abolished; no revolution could stop it; no revolution, to mention only one example, could renounce the use of radio. It is no accident that in this respect movements as opposed as Russian Bolshevism and the different kinds of Fascism had the same consequences as American capitalism—the increase in industrialization and rationalization. This technical progress must lead to a fundamentally different organization of society, for it has become so much a part of our lives that the solution of our ideological and psychological crisis can no longer be separated from that of our economic difficulties, and the present organization of society can be reconciled with our technical and industrial conditions as little as heroism with modern warfare. But socialism in its present form can do little to prevent this new organization from oppressing the individual man; on the contrary, it is in danger of assisting this oppression unless it seeks to base itself on the right ideals.

In this book we have tried to accept all the ideals set out and to follow them as far as possible—that is, as far as they remain consistent with the true needs of our lives and of our human nature. We have perhaps given them more credit than they deserve, and yet we have been forced to reject them. The experiment of the 19th century—to renounce Christ and to live without God—has obviously failed. This can be clearly seen even if we continue for a moment to do what we have done throughout the book—to judge the experiment in its own terms, so as to prevent a premature acceptance of the Christian point of view.

The full development of man's good potentialities, which has yet to be brought about, would be possible

only in a real community where men could work together instead of being forced, by the constant pressure of heroic ambition, of competition, of insecurity and of war, to defend themselves against one another. A real community rests on trust, and trust between men can develop only if two conditions are fulfilled. First, man must be free, for if he is acting under compulsion, we cannot trust him, because a new and stronger compulsion can drive him in a different and unpredictable direction. Secondly, he must recognize some absolute standards. These alone can free him from any compulsion by external forces or by his instincts, and only if we know that he accepts an absolute and unchangeable measure can we rely upon his being trustworthy even in his freedom. These two conditions, however, cannot be fulfilled without religion.

Many may think that this conclusion goes too far, and that we can also rely on morality and a belief in absolute values. Both, as we have stressed again and again, are undoubtedly of the greatest importance, but they are not sufficient without a religious basis. Mere morality is not enough, because it is always in danger of degenerating into a rigid system of external rules and, therefore, into compulsion. It then creates a longing for freedom, which is almost inevitably misunderstood as liberation from morality itself. Nor do absolute values themselves suffice, for they remain vague and incomprehensible without the recognition of a reality from which they spring.

Three absolute values of Truth, Goodness and Beauty are generally accepted, and this acceptance gives them the appearance of being self-evident. It is for this reason that many people think that they can exclude all mystery if they restrict their belief to these values and neglect religion. But these standards are even more mysterious than

most religions. The fact that there has hardly ever been an attempt to explain why there are these values, and these three alone, shows in itself how incomprehensible they are, and if they are divorced from any other and more satisfying reality, it is not even possible to define them correctly, because then we do not know from whence they spring. They are neither separate and independent entities, for they do not exist if they are not recognized by man, nor are they purely human inventions, for man cannot alter them arbitrarily. If this mysterious element is not recognized, they become dangerously vague, and faith in them, though possible, leaves us without any firm belief. The complete trust which is required for a true community cannot be founded solely upon them, because they themselves need a further foundation.

To restrict one's belief to these values means, in fact, intellectual insincerity, for the intellect has to be halted artificially before one reaches the supernatural to which these values point, but which one does not want to acknowledge. It is this attitude which is one of the main reasons for the abdication of the spirit in our world, because it leads away from external reality, without allowing the human mind to reach any other. The absolute values do not suffice to replace religion.

It is more difficult to show that it is not the lack of religious faith in general, but the renunciation of Christ and of the Christian conception of God in particular, which led to this failure. It is true, of course, that our culture developed from this source and that it is the weakening of Christianity, therefore, which was so disastrous for it. But this would not be a sufficient argument to defend Christianity. We cannot accept it for reasons of convenience nor because it seems practical and useful; if

we are to accept it again, it must be because we recognized it as true. Yet the truth of Christianity has a particular quality which makes it difficult for us to grasp.

Christianity is neither a mere moral teaching, nor a metaphysical explanation of the universe; it is the revelation of a supernatural reality. As such we cannot understand it until we have experienced it. We may have evidence of its value through its fruits, but that is not to understand the reality from which they come. We have to believe in it and to transform it into an inner experience before we can fully judge it.

This, however, seems entirely wrong to us, because we have become accustomed to scientific thinking which seems to allow us to believe only what can be proved. This difficulty is increased by a frequent misunderstanding of the basis of this scientific belief which we think so securely founded. Though its deductions often suggest that scientific thinking starts with no assumptions, that it builds its logical structures on no foundation, nevertheless in fact it starts from the given reality which we have to accept and to experience first. It does not prove the existence of external reality, but only extends our knowledge of it and proves or disproves our explanations of it.

Yet the difficulty remains even after we have removed this misunderstanding. We are willing to believe what we can see, touch and measure, and the acts of seeing, touching and measuring, even if they are concerned with a reality whose existence we must accept, seem a sufficient proof to us, but we have lost the confidence that an inner experience can be as reliable as sense-experience. The acceptance of a reality which is accessible only in this way, therefore, seems to imply a renunciation of our critical faculties, while external reality seems to withstand any test.

It would transcend the scope of this investigation to show that faith need not be blind, but that it, too, is open to our critical faculties. That this reality is supernatural—which sounds so strange to us today—does not mean that it is unreal nor that it is entirely beyond human nature. The faculties within us which are concerned with this reality and which allow us to judge it are still there, even if by neglecting them for centuries we have dangerously weakened them. But it is unnecessary to enter into such a discussion here. So long as we stand outside the Christian faith, we can judge it only by its results, and if we look at the achievements of the 19th century, we see that only those of Dostoevsky which are based upon the acceptance of Christianity can lead us forward.

It is not that Dostoevsky's work may be better or greater than that of the other men whom we have considered, but that it is different in kind. The character and teaching of Dostoevsky could not possibly have formed a part of the work of any other writer of the century, but in his works we find all the main ideas of the age expressed, even if they appeared after his books, and their exponents figure there as characters expressing these theories as possible ways of thinking and feeling. His warning of a coming catastrophe, moreover, is not merely one of many similar statements; it is so exact and comprehensive that we gradually recognize in it our contemporary situation. As this situation develops we see it to be the result of the chaos which he showed. These achievements which we see in his work obviously spring from a deeper and more complete knowledge of reality, and Dostoevsky leaves us in doubt that his knowledge comes from his faith in Christ.

We could perhaps compare him with one of his own characters, with Stavrogin in *The Possessed*. Stavrogin repeats the experiment of the 19th century; he imbues

his disciples with the different ideas of the century and watches their effects. He also shows the failure of this experiment, for he has no other belief and feels a desperate need to accept one of these ideas, and thus, because all his friends are destroyed by them so that none of them can help him, he is driven to suicide. Dostoevsky watches the 19th century as Stavrogin does, but he stands outside it, and because of his Christian faith he is saved.

Dostoevsky's work has suffered the peculiar fate of being accepted and yet of hardly ever converting its admirers to Christianity. His belief in Christ is usually considered only as an aesthetic element within his artistic work. But we shall understand him completely only if we take his belief in Christ seriously; only then shall we be able to see beyond the chaos and no longer miss the second part of *The Brothers Karamazov*, the conclusion of Alyosha's life; then we shall recognize that the basis of our future development is also contained in his works. The fact, however, that it is the work of Dostoevsky which shows the way to this future development is of importance for Christianity too. Its peculiar effect comes from the difference between his Christianity and what we have become accustomed to consider as Christian faith; it shows us that we are in need of a restatement of the Christian creed, and that the experiment of the 19th century can help us to recognize what is required.

Everything which has previously been accepted, without scrutiny or much thinking, is now open to doubt and in need of justification. It is no longer possible to present man with any dogma as self-evident truth. All of us who are awake must recognize that belief in God, king and country, and in any form of government, is shaken—how else could they change? We can no longer take refuge in the ecstasies of nationalism, nor of Romanticism, nor of

spiritual isolation. Certainly all the wrong ideas, even if they have been undermined, are still being defended, perhaps with even more passion than before, but anybody who is willing to think can easily refute their claim to exclusive validity. Even the worship of the hero, probably the strongest of all, is wavering; heroic deeds once more need justification. The natural sciences obviously do not provide the standards by which to make the right use of their results. Progress, after two world wars, is an unlikely hypothesis. No external standards remain to help us; no emperor, no priest can take shelter behind a claim to divine right; the conquest of the world justifies neither the hero nor the natural sciences nor capitalism. Our doubts can no longer be silenced by an appeal to tradition.

Man faces the universe alone. Over a great part of the world his external fate is perhaps less free than it has ever been, but there is no power which can force the man who is willing and able to think to judge this life blindly as good or bad, to force upon him any moral teaching or religious dogma, to prevent him from making comparisons. All traditional concepts and all artificial presuppositions have been shaken so that he is not forced to accept any opinion or set of rules of behaviour or belief.

This complete liberation of man from all spiritual chains is an enormous danger. We do not need to explain this, for we are watching the catastrophe which comes from this unfettering of the human mind. The complete destruction of all tradition may easily lead to a new age of barbarism, dangerously different from mankind's primitive state, because weak spiritual powers have at their disposal high scientific and technical equipment. It is possible, moreover, that this barbarism, which will have to develop for a very long time before a new culture can

arise, is already present in many parts of the world. It is possible that the foregoing remarks, still valid for the Western world and applicable, two or three decades ago, to the whole of Europe, are no longer of such general validity.

It is, however, because this catastrophe is due to the liberation of man that it can be met by Christianity. Christianity, as we said before, is neither a moral teaching nor a metaphysical explanation of the world. It is concerned with the individual, for it reveals a reality which can only be grasped through the inner experiences of man, and this reality shows man his rightful place in the universe. It confirms his importance in spite of his infinitesimal smallness compared with the vastness of the external world. He is dependent neither on moral achievements nor on any complicated metaphysical knowledge, for the experience of this reality shows him directly what he is and what he has to do. Thus the true community which is obviously needed to give order to the chaos can be founded, not upon human ideals which if they aim at a community only subordinate the individual to some kind of organization, but upon this supernatural reality which is the common bond which creates the possibility of trust between individuals. The brotherhood of men is based upon the fatherhood of God. Yet God Himself is not some mysterious metaphysical entity unconnected with man, for Christ, true God and true man, shows us in human terms what this vague and unreal concept "supernatural reality" really means. He embodies clearly the fatherhood of God and the sonship of man. It is thus, too, that we avoid the danger of fixing our attention upon a misleading and easy Utopian perfection, for the present catastrophe does not affect the relevance of Christianity whose emphasis is not on Paradise, but on the Cross.

There is nothing in the Christian faith which cannot face the world as it is.

To be able to fulfil its task, however, Christian teaching has to find its way back to man; it has to find its way back to that fullness of life and that direct expression in human terms, which it has in Christ and in Dostoevsky's works. It must be intelligible to man, even though it infinitely transcends him. It must not remain a colourless doctrine, powerless in comparison with nationalism or heroism, but must develop the true nature of man, so that it can appeal to him and move him more deeply than all other creeds.

The Christian teaching must become once more clear and simple. Yet clarity and simplicity are not, as is often thought, the point from which a belief starts, the most primitive stage of its development, but its highest achievements. We cannot attain to simplicity by giving up our endeavours, by neglecting all the previous results of man's striving, by going back to something which we call nature; this leads to barbarism and not to simplicity. The simplest and yet the most adequate and comprehensive way of expression can be found only after all the relevant possibilities of the human mind have been pursued to their final conclusions.

It is for both these reasons—because the meaning of Christianity must be expressed in human terms and because simplicity comes only through our greatest endeavours—that we have tried, when considering false ideals, to accept them as far as possible, so that we could clearly understand everything which they contributed to the liberation of man and to the development of human nature. It is for this reason, too, that we started from Kant and Goethe whose great achievements can help us to discover all those elements in human life which are fruit-

ful and which can contribute to our knowledge. Looking back, we can see that, even though they themselves partially rejected it, their achievements were only possible because they still lived within the Christian tradition, for everything which seemed to promise liberation from Christianity led nowhere. But it is just as important to recognize how urgent it is to include in Christianity that full development of man which we could see there. Only thus shall we be able to avoid the errors of Kant's last works, to achieve the harmony of which Goethe's life was an example, and to aim at a world where Christ is no longer crucified.

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CHAPTER IX

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What Shall We Do Then?
The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated
My Religion
The First Step
The Kingdom of God is Within You
The Christian Teaching
What is Art?
The Slavery of Our Time
I Cannot Remain Silent

His own diaries and correspondence and those of his wife are also of great interest.

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